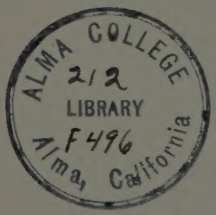
THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE
CHURCH OF CHRIST

ITS FOUNDATION AND CONSTITUTION

BY

FATHER PETER FINLAY, S.J.



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON
FOURTH AVENUE & 30TH STREET, NEW YORK
BOMBAY, CALCUTTA, AND MADRAS
1915

5701

TO

THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS

OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN IRELAND

P. F.

Nihil obstat:

GULIELMUS HENRY, S.J.

Imprimi potest:

T. V. NOLAN, S.J.,
Præp. Prov. Hib.

Imprimatur:

GULIELMUS, *Archiep. Dublin.*
Hiberniæ Primas.

THE following Lectures were delivered in the Dublin College of the National University of Ireland. They have been published at the desire of a very dear friend, who has defrayed the whole cost of publication, that so they might issue at a very reduced price, and might reach a wider circle of readers. It has been thought best to print them exactly as they were delivered, with whatever shortcomings are incidental to the Lecture form.

MILLTOWN PARK,
October, 1915.

Most of the references which occur in these pages are from the New Testament writings. Some few are from the Fathers and Councils. When not otherwise noted, the following abbreviations are used :—

Harduin : Conciliorum Collectio Regia Maxima ; Parisiis, 1715.

Hefele : Conziliengeschichte ; First Edit.

Denz. : Denziger-Bannwart : Enchiridion Symbolorum ; Friburgi, 1908.

M. G. : Migne, Patrologia, Seria Græca.

M. L. : Migne, Patrologia, Seria Latina.

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LECTURE I.

THE SOURCES:

THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS.

When I learned that the Catholic Bishops of Ireland had decided, with the approval of the Senate, to establish a Professorship of Theology in the National University, and had nominated me to the position, I thought at first that we should begin these lectures by defining the nature and scope of theological studies, their place in a University, and their bearing upon the intellectual attitude and practical conduct of educated Catholics, lay, not less than clerical. But I reflected that this work has been already done—done, too, with a grace and thoroughness which render any other attempt not merely unnecessary, but in this place at least, well-nigh presumptuous. It was done by the first Rector of the Catholic University of Ireland, John Henry Newman, when he delivered the second, third, and fourth of his "Dis-

courses on the Scope and Nature of University Education," addressed to the Catholics of Dublin.

Omitting, therefore, all such preliminary and general considerations, I purpose dealing with a question of theology, which is fundamental in our Catholic system, which marks us off sharply from all other religious organizations, and which gives us intellectually and emotionally a sense of religious peace and security to be obtained nowhere else. We assent to a large body of Divine truths, we accept a large body of moral precepts, on the authority of the Church. We receive her rites and ministrations, at the value which she herself sets on them. We may, of course, assure ourselves, by personal study, of the truth and reasonableness of individual doctrines, and of the wisdom or need of particular laws. But the great majority of men and women are quite unfitted for any detailed investigation of religious teachings. In religion, as in history, in mathematics, in philology, and in all the arts and sciences, the multitude must be guided in action and in opinion by authority. Even the few who have ability, leisure and opportunity for independent research must pay the price of almost exclusive devotion to severe and specialized studies,

before they can place any well-founded confidence in their own conclusions. It is, therefore, supremely reasonable that we Catholics generally should take our religion upon trust, as, in fact, we do; while it is of vital importance to us that the authority in which we trust shall be one on which we can unhesitatingly rely.

For, logically, we base our certainty in religion on our certainty that the Church has authority from God to teach what truths we must believe, and what laws of conduct we must follow. And this certainty we do not derive from the Church's teaching. She does, indeed, teach her own infallibility and her power to make laws and to enforce them. But we do not admit her claim until we have satisfied ourselves on other grounds that it is well founded. We do not acquiesce in a man's pretensions to teach and legislate merely because he puts them forward.

And this leads us to inquire for what reasons, other than her own assertions, do we acknowledge the authority which we attribute to the Church. That inquiry will form the subject of this present course of lectures.

In entering on the inquiry, it will, I think, make for clearness, if I point out briefly the

various stages of the argument which I hope to lay before you, and their enchainment each with the other.

We have to show, then, that the Catholic Church, of which we are members, has a Divine right to prescribe for us a rule of religious belief and of moral conduct. To do so we must show that the Catholic Church of our day is the one true Church of Christ, the possessor, in legitimate succession, of all the rights and prerogatives which Christ bestowed on the organized society that He Himself established. We must show further that He had it in His power to grant such an authority, which only God can give; and we must consequently show that He was very God Himself. Or, conversely, we shall endeavour to satisfy ourselves that we have, in the Gospel and other writings of the New Testament, authentic historical documents of first-rate importance, which prove beyond all reasonable doubt that Christ was God; that He established a visible society, one and imperishable, in which He appointed an authority that is infallible in its religious teaching, and supreme in government; and that the Catholic Church, as we know it to-day, is that society. Clearly,

it is impossible to exaggerate the vital consequences of such a position. For, if we can make it good, the Catholic Church in its authoritative teaching is in a very real sense the living voice of God, and in its legislation the very will of God. We can no more hesitate to accept her teaching than we should hesitate to accept the testimony of God, and no more set her laws aside than we may set aside the laws of God Himself.

We begin, then, to-day with the question which comes logically first in our inquiry : What is the historical value of the New Testament writings, in particular of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the greater Letters of St. Paul? For these are the chief sources from which we derive our knowledge of Jesus Christ, of the claims which He put forward, the promises He made, and the work which He accomplished. I do not, of course, suggest that no other sources are open to us. Indeed, we could still make good our case, were every copy of the New Testament writings to perish. The history of the Church, the writings of the Fathers, oral traditions, would suffice. But, as they stand, and for the purpose we have in view, they offer us the simplest, easiest and most convincing

evidence; and all other evidences can be only subsidiary to them. And this, not because they are inspired writings. They are so, no doubt; but we are not concerned with their inspiration here; we take them as purely human documents, of purely human origin; we shall deal with them as we should with a publication in the "Rolls Series," or with any other profane history. If they are fully trustworthy in the account they give us of the Founder of our religion, we ask at present no more from them.

And, as purely human documents, they are fully trustworthy.

I do not, of course, intend asking your attention for a technical dissertation on what is called the "Higher Criticism"—the scientific discussion of the authorship, date, composition, and authority of the books of the New Testament. It would take too long, and would, I fear, prove too uninteresting. It will be enough to set out shortly the origin and course of the controversy, and the general results, which in the opinion of the ablest scholars of every school of thought, we may regard as definitely secured.

The portions, then, of the New Testament with which we are concerned here were written

originally in Greek, if we except the Gospel of St. Matthew, which was written most probably in Aramaic, the language of Judea, Galilee, and Perea, the country in which its scenes are laid.[1] Of the original manuscripts, as might have been expected, no one has come down to us. We are in the same position as regards the Scriptures that we hold as regards the Greek and Latin Classics, and almost the whole literature of antiquity: we have only copies of the originals or copies of copies. Of these copies over 4000 manuscripts—some containing all, others portions only of the New Testament—have been already catalogued and partly studied. The multiplication of copies by writing leads almost of necessity to differences of text; the accuracy of our days was impossible before the art of printing; and in early Christian times there was no one to correspond with our careful editors and exact proof readers. We are not surprised, therefore, to find variant readings—more than 150,000—in the earlier sources of the New Testament text. But very few of them are of any real importance; 7000 out of 8000 verses are to be considered, accord-

[1] The Aramaic text has been lost: we have only the Greek translation, made we cannot say by whom.

ing to Westcott and Hort, as definitely established; no serious doubt exists about fifty-nine-sixtieths of the whole number; and no question of any consequence is dependent on any difference of reading. Indeed, no text in classical literature can compare in certainty and purity with the text of the New Testament; except Virgil only, which stands on approximately the same level. And no manuscript copy of any classical author approaches at all so near to the date of the original as do our New Testament manuscripts to the date of theirs. Twenty of the texts are prior to the eighth century, a dozen are of the sixth, five of the fifth, and two of the fourth. Some fragments on papyrus discovered recently in Egypt belong to the fourth century, one even to the third.

Besides, we have the ancient versions—several of them translations from texts which were older than our oldest Greek manuscripts. Chief amongst them is the Itala—a Latin version going back to the second century, revised by St. Jerome in the fourth century, and in common use throughout Western Christendom since the sixth century under the name of the Vulgate. Then we have Syriac versions: the Diatessaron

of Tatian in the second century; the Sinai Palimpsest, discovered recently by an English lady, Mrs. Lewis, perhaps of the second, at latest the third, century; the Curetonian Codex, of the third century also; and the Peshitto or Syriac Vulgate—a fifth century revision. In Egyptian we have the Coptic in Lower Egypt, dating from the fifth century, and the Theban or Sahidic, in Upper Egypt, of the third or, possibly, of the second. And we have also—though they are of less importance—early translations into Armenian, Ethiopian, Georgian, and Gothic.

Finally, if all these texts were lost, it would still be possible to reconstitute the whole New Testament from the quotations in the Fathers of the first centuries.

No wonder that scholars should be at one in holding that we have in our present-day text of the New Testament, not only substantially, but in all-important particulars, the original text, as it proceeded from its authors.

And now what is its value as history? We may have the pure text of a historical work, and yet its value as history may be of the slightest. Vital as the question must seem to us, it was

scarcely discussed at all until the eighteenth century. Even Reformation controversies led to no immediate scepticism as to the truthfulness of the New Testament writings, their authorship, or date of composition. It was the anti-Christian spirit of the eighteenth century which gave rise to the Higher Criticism. The Deists in England and Germany—men like Toland, Collins, Woolston, Tindal, Reimarus, Lessing, and Semler—with Voltaire and his friends in France, were bent on destroying Christianity; and you cannot reject Christianity if you accept the New Testament as authentic history. Hence a strange variety of opinions:—The writers of the New Testament were conscious impostors, as was their Master, and planned and carried out a fraud upon the world. They were enthusiasts, who, on a slender foundation of facts, built up a superstructure of marvellous teaching and of preternatural events. They intended to narrate events truly, but were themselves deceived in the interpretation which they put upon them. They wrote so long after the incidents they describe, and popular myths had so grown up in the meantime around the actual occurrences, that, while honestly recording the beliefs of their

day, they have given us only unreliable legends. Or, finally, the New Testament writings are merely symbolical; are intended only to express the religious experiences of Christ and His followers—experiences which we must strive to reproduce within our own souls, and which are quite independent of the letter of the records in which we read of them. I need not add to this list of theories, or particularize the authors and chief exponents of them. Strauss, Baur, Renan, Jülicher, Ritschl, Harnack, Matthew Arnold, F. D. Maurice, Sabatier, Loisy, and Tyrrell are names with which we are familiar; and they, and those who think with them—whatever their differences may be in detail—are agreed in denying that the New Testament is serious history. And whether it is or is not is the main question for our consideration to-day.

In dealing with it, the chief points to be inquired into are:—When were the writings of the New Testament composed? Who were the writers? Were they honest? Were they well-informed about the events which they describe? For it is clear that these are the essential conditions of all true history: the historian must have a knowledge of what he sets down, he must

set it down as he knows it, and he must have been a witness, or in contact, mediately or immediately, with contemporaneous witnesses, of the facts and sayings that make up his narrative. If the Evangelists, the writer of the Acts of the Apostles, and St. Paul were contemporaries of Christ and lived with a generation which had known Him; if they were well-informed and sincere; and if—as we have seen is the case—their account of Him has come down to us as they wrote it, then we have all the material for judging accurately of Christ's person and character and plans.

First, then: When were the books of the New Testament written? Thirty or forty years ago it was common among the more advanced non-Catholic students of the Higher Criticism to assert that the whole of the New Testament, except four Epistles of St. Paul (Rom., Gal., 1 and 2 Cor.), were composed in the second century. As in the case of Darwinism, we Catholics were looked upon as utterly unscientific, because we refused to accept the new ideas. Not that records put into writing a century or more after the events they chronicle, must necessarily be untrustworthy. They may, as we all know, be more reliable

than contemporary accounts. A history may be written, fifty or a hundred years hence, which shall be more in accordance with the facts of the past twelve months than what we have read in the columns of the daily Press. And, even had the New Testament books, as we have them, been written in the second century, we could trust them fully, if we knew the writers to be honest and thoroughly informed men. But we Catholics continued to hold the traditional view, which had come down to us from the very earliest times, and which attributed all the New Testament books, excepting only the Gospel of St. John, to the second half of the first century. And all that is best and most authoritative in even non-Catholic Higher Criticism has now accepted our opinion. Slowly, step by step, the critics have been forced back to earlier and earlier dates, until at present there is little with which we need quarrel in their conclusions. Thus Professor Harnack, of Berlin, probably the greatest living authority among non-Catholics on early Church history, thinks that Luke may have been written between the years 60 and 70, probably towards the beginning of the decade; Mark somewhat earlier; Matthew between 70 and 86, and John between 80 and 110.

The Acts of the Apostles, he thinks, were written nearer to 60 than 70; the earliest Epistles of St. Paul between 52 and 58. And Professor Harnack cannot be counted among the orthodox or conservative Protestants; he would date the New Testament writings later, as he admits, and as indeed he once did, if his historical conscience would allow him. Catholic critics adopt approximately the same dates. Cornely, indeed, assigns earlier ones; he places Matthew between 40 and 50, Mark between 52 and 62, Luke from 59 to 63, and John from 96 to 98. But Catholics generally, with many of the more conservative Protestant scholars, place the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in the year 70, and the Gospel of St. John at the close of the first century. The Epistles of St. Paul will lie between 51, when 1 and 2 Thessalonians were written, and 66, the year before St. Paul died. And the Acts of the Apostles were composed, most likely, about the years 62-64, at the close of St. Paul's first Roman imprisonment, to which allusion is made in the last paragraph of the book.

I do not purpose wearying you with the technical evidence, internal and external, on which scholars

base these conclusions. It is within easy reach, in the later works of Professor Harnack, in the works of Sanday, Stanton, and Leighton-Pullan among Anglicans; and in Batiffol, Durand, Jacquier, the Catholic Encyclopædia, Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique, and other Catholic publications. I shall only emphasize the fact that what we may call the Apostolic writings —those amongst them which are universally recognized as genuine, and which are abundantly sufficient to inform us fully about Christ's person and work—were all written between the years 50 and 100 or 110, most of them before the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70, and, therefore, well within the lifetime of multitudes who had themselves looked on Christ and listened to His teaching, and of larger multitudes who had known His contemporaries.

Our next question is concerned with the authorship of the New Testament books. Who were the writers? At first sight it seems a question which answers itself. Are not our Gospels entitled "According to St. Matthew," "According to St. Mark"; and the Epistles: "St. Paul the Apostle to the Romans," "St. Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians," "The General Epistle of St.

James," and so forth? But these titles are far from deciding the question; indeed, it has been argued by some that the very phrase "according to St. Matthew" implies a denial of St. Matthew's authorship, though it also implies that the contents of the book are according to his teaching. Nor is the question in itself a very important one. The historical value of a work is not dependent on the name of the writer. It matters little who wrote the books of the New Testament, if the authors lived in Christ's time and country, or were intimate with those who had been witnesses to His life, and were accurate in their information and truthful in recording it. But while this is so, yet we need have no hesitation in accepting the traditional view that the New Testament books are really by the writers whose names they bear. Some would have us except the Epistle to the Hebrews and the second Epistle of St. Peter; but even critically there seems to be no sufficient grounds for doing so, and there are weighty arguments in favour of their authenticity. As regards the other books, the testimony of the early Church writers appears convincing. Clement of Rome, in his letter to the Corinthians, about 95 A.D., refers them to "the Epistle of the Blessed

Paul the Apostle. What did he first write to you in the beginning of the Gospel?" About 130 A.D., Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis, mentions the Gospels written by St. Matthew and St. Mark; Irenæus, about 185 A.D., tells us that "Luke the companion of St. Paul recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him"; the Muratorian fragment, about 180 A.D., assigns the "third book of the Gospel" and the "Acts of all the Apostles" to St. Luke; "the fourth of the Gospels" and Epistles to St. John; and almost all the other books to the same writers to whom we assign them. Justin Martyr, about 152 A.D., speaks of "Memoirs . . . which are called Gospels," and he says "They were compiled by Christ's Apostles and those who companied with them". Marcion of Pontus, a heretic, writing in Rome, about 144 A.D., while rejecting other books, retains the Gospel written by St. Luke, the friend of Paul, and ten of St. Paul's epistles. Other witnesses, too, might be quoted from the second century, and later witnesses in abundance. Now, if we take into account how very scanty is the Christian literature which has come down to us from the second century, and the fact that nowhere in any early writer is any other New

Testament author mentioned than those we are familiar with; and the further fact that our witnesses were born, the earlier ones in Apostolic times, the later in a generation which had known the friends of the Apostles, we need not hesitate to maintain the traditional opinion. And, incidentally, we may note in these evidences from the first half and middle of the second century, how widely spread the New Testament writings already were, how unquestioningly they were accepted, and therefore how much earlier they must have been composed and brought to the knowledge of the Faithful.

But are they based on accurate information? Can we feel sure that the authors were acquainted with the incidents and teachings which they describe? If we exclude the supernatural from our inquiry, critics generally, even the more unorthodox, will reply in the affirmative. Accepting the common theory of authorship, Matthew and John were themselves witnesses of nearly all that they relate. Mark was disciple and companion of St. Peter, and his Gospel is a summary of Peter's preaching. Luke himself tells us of the inquiries he had made; and he makes mention of various written narratives, which were already in exis-

tence, when he undertook his own Gospel, and on which we may be sure he built. Indeed, all three Synoptic writers may have utilized previously existing documents; and St. John, when he came to write his Gospel, may have had the three Synoptists before him, and various other documents as well. The author of the Acts may have been himself present at most of the incidents which he narrates in the first half of the book; and he was certainly the companion of St. Paul during the missions and journeyings which he narrates in the second. Besides, all the New Testament writers lived and conversed habitually with men who had known the Christ, and who had taken part in the agitation and controversies to which His life and teaching had given rise.

Further, the statements which they make, so far as we can control them by other sources of information, are found to be singularly exact. They give us a chronology of the principal events in Christ's life; they set out a mass of details concerning the conditions, political, social, administrative, and religious, of Palestine at that time; they have much to say about individuals: Herod, Pilate, Caiaphas, Felix, Porcius Festus, Agrippa, and others: and wherever we

are able to test their accuracy by profane historians, such as Tacitus and Josephus, by the Talmud, by medals and inscriptions, or in any other way, they stand the test.

Again, the Epistles of St. Paul (except Hebrews, and those to Titus and to Timothy) are held by the great majority of every class of critics to be authentic writings of the Apostle, composed between the years 48 and 66—twenty or thirty years after Christ's death, and consequently within the lifetime of a generation which had seen and listened to Christ. They confirm fully and in considerable detail the Gospel statements. There seems, then, to be no reason whatever for questioning the fullness and accuracy of knowledge which the New Testament writers possessed.

And were they truthful and honest, in setting down what they knew? No scholar nowadays would venture to accuse them of conscious fraud. The very books themselves impress a reader with the conviction that the authors were plain, straightforward men, describing simply what they had seen or heard, or had learned from others, on whose evidence they could rely. There is a naturalness in their narratives which it would be

difficult to reconcile with an intention to deceive. Besides, they were writing, if we except St. John, for contemporaries of the Christ. Many of their readers had listened to His discourses, and seen His works, been present at His Passion, and shared in the occurrences that followed on His death. Many more had learned the details from eye-witnesses. The Evangelists and St. Paul would not have dared, even had they been willing, to falsify or invent. Further, what had they to gain by fraud? Like the soldiers set to guard the tomb, they might have hoped for payment, if they gave testimony against Christ. But what advantage could they look for, after He had been taken from them, in renewing His claims, and publishing His doctrines, and announcing to the world, both Jew and Gentile, the terrible injustice which their own people had done to Him? What could they expect unless what actually befell them: to be "scourged, and charged that they should not speak at all in the name of Jesus,"[1] and, should they persevere, to be treated as St. Paul describes in his second letter to the Corinthians: "Of the Jews five times did I receive forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with

[1] Acts v. 40.

rods; once I was stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day I was in the depth of the sea. In journeying often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils from my own nation, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils from false brethren. In labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness"?[1] If they were not constrained by a love of truth, it would have been wiser and of more immediate profit to be silent, or to falsify their story, as their rulers would have wished.

But, furthermore, the context of the writings bears testimony to their truth. In any other hypothesis, the Evangelists and St. Paul must have conspired to foist a lie upon the world—a lie which has succeeded in capturing the loftiest intelligences and the noblest hearts which the world has seen since then. The most wonderful of the Gospel miracles pales before a wonder such as this. And, had they conspired, they would have arranged their methods differently. They would, for instance, have guarded against discrepancies in their

[1] 2 Corinthians xi. 24.

stories. Discrepancies in different accounts of the same events, if they are concerned with unimportant details only, are no proof of error or of falsehood in the main facts stated. But, when witnesses are planning a fraud, they endeavour to agree even in the minor circumstances. And there are discrepancies between the narratives in the New Testament—trivial ones, it is true, but such as witnesses conspiring to propagate a falsehood would have been careful to avoid. Again, only a love of truth could have led the Evangelists to paint the Apostles as they have painted them—poor men, ill-educated, "foolish, and slow of heart," jealous, cowardly; not at all the men, humanly speaking, to found a great movement, and win enthusiastic adherents to it. Untruthful men would have pictured a Jewish Messiah—an earthly prince, and an earthly kingdom, in which they themselves might hope for high place. They would even have given us a different Christ; He would scarcely have been poor, an artisan, tempted by the devil, or compassionate to the Magdalen, or the friend of sinners, or agonizing in the garden, or powerless before His tormentors, or desolate upon the Cross. The Jews had never dreamed of such a

Saviour. Neither had they ever risen to the moral elevation of much of our Lord's teaching. The Sermon on the Mount, the Discourse at the Last Supper, many of the parables, the moral precepts introduced by the words: "It was said to you of old, but I say to you"—what mere Jew, brought up in the tradition of his people, could have conceived or formulated them? And what, unless the truth of facts, could lead Jewish writers to picture such a Messiah and ascribe such teachings to Him?

But, sincere and truthful as they may have been, can they not have been themselves deceived? May not myths have grown up, popular distortions of incidents and discourses, between the period of Christ's life and the composition of the New Testament writings? This, indeed, is the theory of the older rationalists, and was the reason why they endeavoured to throw back the date of composition into the second century. That would have given time for the growth of myths. But the dates which are now scientifically established exclude the theory: Christ died in the year 29 or 30 of our present era; the three Synoptic Gospels were written before the destruction of Jerusalem in the year

70; the Epistles of St. Paul were written between the year 51 and 64 or 67, when he died; the Acts of the Apostles were written in 62 or 64, at the close of St. Paul's first imprisonment in Rome. The earlier writings date from some fifteen or twenty years after Christ's death; the later—of the same character as the earlier—are only some ten or fifteen years more distant. What widespread persistent myths can grow up in fifteen years, or even in thirty or thirty-five, especially in connexion with well-known personages and public occurrences, and easily ascertained facts, on which the attention of many thousands has been riveted? The myth theory must stand or fall with the late, second century, composition of the New Testament writings.

We may, then, on all these grounds, which cumulatively appear convincing, accept the New Testament writers as entirely sincere and truthful.

To resume: We have, in the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles of St. Paul, what purports to be a life of Christ and a record of His works and teachings. These books were written by men who lived in Christ's own day, who were His countrymen, who wrote for a generation

that was born before Christ died, many of whom had themselves been witnesses of the events described. The writers had abundant means of verifying all the statements which they made; they had had personal experience of some; they had contemporary oral evidence and written testimony for others. They had every motive to be truthful; and all the evidence, external and internal, proves convincingly that they were. We may trust, then, with absolute certainty in what they tell us about Christ and about the Society or Church which He planned and founded. If they do not give us authentic history on these points we can scarcely hope for any authentic history whatsoever.

And the fate of the New Testament apocryphal writings confirms our certainty. For there were other Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, and Epistles, in the early Church. But you have only to compare them cursorily with the books of which we have been speaking to see what a difference separates the two literatures, and how reliable the judgment of the early Christians was, when they rejected the apocryphal and approved of our canonical writings.

We shall assume then, in our further inquiries,

the substantial historical accuracy of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the greater Epistles of St. Paul. We may, indeed, appeal on occasion to other historical documents of unquestioned authority; but our chief and most trustworthy sources of information will be those books of the New Testament to which we have referred.

And, basing our investigation on those books, we shall next inquire into the personality and authority of Christ our Lord.

LECTURE II.

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

In the previous Lecture we inquired into the historical value of those books of the New Testament—the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the greater Epistles of St. Paul—from which our knowledge of Christ, His life, His character, His teaching, and His work, is chiefly derived. We purpose studying the foundation and constitution of the society which He established. It is of vital importance, therefore, that we should know the authority which He had to found it, the power He had to communicate to it the prerogatives which it claims; and we can determine this most easily from the records which the New Testament contains. If the New Testament writers may be fully relied upon, we have abundant data for forming a clear, decisive judgment on the person and projects of Christ; and we can then pass on to the chief object of our investiga-

tion—the constitution which He bestowed upon His Church.

And we have seen that the New Testament records are authentic history. They were written by men who lived in the days of Christ, some of them His intimate friends, all of them associated closely with His relatives and companions, men, therefore, who could not be ignorant or ill-informed of the events and discourses which they describe. The simple style of their narratives, the utter absence of any apparent wish to exaggerate or make capital out of the incidents narrated, the lack of any motive for deceiving their readers, give us confidence in their truthfulness. And this confidence is confirmed by all the evidence we can bring to bear from other sources—by the fact that they wrote so soon after the events described (all of them, except one, within from fifteen to forty years after the occurrences), and consequently before the popular recollection had become distorted or obscured; and by the further fact that they would not dare, even though they had been willing, to misrepresent what was within the personal knowledge of so many of those for whom they wrote. In a word, they were men who could not but know

the facts they were writing about ; and there is no reason whatever to doubt their good faith and honesty. We may, therefore, accept their writings—the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the greater Epistles of St. Paul—as historical documents of first-class importance and authority, and proceed to study in them the personality of Christ.

"Whom do men say that I am?" Christ asked of the Apostles ; and it is the same question we are to discuss to-day : Whom do the New Testament writings prove Christ to have been?

That He was a man, in all essentials like other men, is beyond controversy. There were, indeed, heretics, in the early Church, who held that He was man in appearance only ; as there were others who maintained that His human nature was only partially complete—that Divinity assumed the functions of mind or soul or will ; and as there are extreme rationalists in our own time, who deny the historic existence of the Christ altogether. But such heretics were always relatively few ; and such extreme rationalists are rare. If anything is clear from New Testament history, it is that there was a man, Christ, born

of a human mother into the world of Palestine some nineteen hundred years ago ; that He lived among His fellows, a man like themselves, with human feelings, thoughts and wishes ; that He suffered, and shrank from suffering ; that He loved, and was gladdened by others' love ; that He was put to death, and died upon a cross. No fact in all history, profane or sacred, is more certain than the existence and the reality of the human nature of Jesus Christ.

But, was He more than man? I do not mean in the sense that He had a Divine mission, a God-given message to communicate, a God-given authority to make laws and to enforce them. He might be a mere man, and yet have both ; as Moses and others of the Prophets had. But was He Himself Divine? Had He the very nature of God? Were His words the words of God? Are His promises the promises of God? Is His power the omnipotence of God?

I shall not detain you with any attempt to define exactly the concept of Godhead, as we attribute it to Christ. You may meet with men who deny God's existence, with some again who profess their inability to form a definite opinion on the point, and with others who hesitate to rest their

belief in it on the generally accepted proofs. But they are all at one with orthodox believers as to what the idea of God involves. Their denials, their uncertainties, their controversies themselves are all concerned with the same infinitely perfect Being, whom Christians love and worship. And we have no need to determine further for the present what is signified by the concept and name of God.

Assuming, then, the general idea which is present to the minds of all educated persons, when they speak of God, we proceed to inquire —and it is the question I ask you to consider with me to-day—do the writings of the New Testament afford us convincing proof that Christ was God? The answer must be affirmative.

And, first, the writers of the New Testament themselves and their contemporaries were firm believers in the Divinity of Christ. St. John's Gospel opens with a clear statement of his own belief: "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was God . . . and the Word was made Flesh".[1] In the last chapter but one he gives the confession of St. Thomas: "My Lord and my God".[2] St. Paul addresses the elders of

[1] St. John I. 1. [2] *Ibid.*, XX. 28.

the Church of Ephesus, and commends to them "the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood".[1] He tell the Colossians that in Christ "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily".[2] He reminds the Romans of the glory of Israel, "of whom is Christ according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen."[3] But I shall not multiply instances. Christ's Divinity, it may be said, is a matter of inference, and the New Testament writers, however admirable as witnesses to facts, may have been honestly mistaken in the inferences which they drew from them.

So I shall ask you to consider two arguments, based upon the New Testament writings, both conclusive, I think, of the Divinity of Christ: the second of them forming the very foundation of the Apostolic preaching. They are, first, the character of Christ and the claims which He Himself put forward; and, secondly, the fact of His Resurrection.

I do not, of course, call in question the value of other arguments as well. I know, for instance, that His Divine mission and His Divinity itself can be proved by the prophecies of the Old Tes-

[1] Acts xx. 28. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 9. [3] *Ibid.*, ix. 5.

tament and their fulfilment in His person: He frequently appeals to them Himself. I know they can be proved by the many miracles He wrought: "The works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness to Me. . . . Though you will not believe Me, believe the works";[1] "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the dead rise again".[2] I am sure they can be proved by the hold which His teaching has taken upon the world, and the marvellous change which Christianity has wrought in human ideals, and in moral theory and practice. What but the truth of His Divinity could induce the world to accept doctrines so startling and so improbable; which make such grave demands on mind and heart and external action; which rouse such constant, often fierce, opposition from prejudice and passion and pride? Then, too, I remember that the Apostolic Church confessed Him to be God. They did not merely reverence Him as a saint; they did not only admire Him as a model. They prayed to Him as being God Himself. "And they stoned Stephen," the Acts of the Apostles tell us of the

[1] John x. 25. [2] Matt. xi. 5.

first martyr, "invoking and saying : Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. . . . Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."[1] And the same Acts, describing the miracle upon the lame man at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, quote St. Peter's words : "Silver and gold have I none ; but what I have I give thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk."[2] And St. Paul's Epistles abound with invocations of Christ which are meaningless, unless he believed Christ was God : "Peace be to the brethren and charity with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ";[3] "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ";[4] "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all".[5] And these instances might be multiplied indefinitely. But there is no need ; for nothing is plainer, through the pages of the New Testament, than that the Apostles themselves and their first converts thought of Christ as God, so soon as He was taken from them. They turned to Him in prayerful adoration ; belief in Him, hope in Him, love of Him, became the conditions of their salvation. I would

[1] Acts VII. 58. [2] *Ibid.*, III. 6. [3] Ephes. VI. 23.
[4] Gal. I. 3 *et passim.* [5] 2 Cor. XIII. 13.

not, of course, deny, I would not minimize in the least, the efficacy of such arguments. But I would submit for your consideration the two to which I have already referred, as simpler in themselves, and, if the New Testament writings be truthful records, as entirely unanswerable.

First, then, Christ Himself claims persistently and in the clearest manner to be God. Therefore I conclude He was God. I do not usually admit a man's claim merely because he puts it forward; but I do in the case of Christ.

To appreciate the argument rightly we must consider the human character of Christ. The world, whatever its religious opinions, is agreed that, if the Gospel story be a true one, Christ was an absolutely perfect man. There is no other human character in all authentic history, there is no creation of poet or philosopher, which we should think for a moment of comparing with Him. We feel, indeed, that He must have lived and taught and acted as the Evangelists describe Him; that their story must be true; they could never have invented it. He stands apart from all who went before, and have followed after, not more in arresting the attention of mankind, and challenging their judgment of Him, than in

the singular unanimity with which He has been proclaimed the highest type and expression of our humanity. "Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"[1] He asks at Cesarea Philippi; and the answer of mankind, of orthodox, of heretic, and of infidel alike, has only grown in distinctness and in emphasis through the centuries since then. As they realize more fully how much the world owes Him, they reply more clearly: "If the Christ of the Gospel be as He is depicted there, then He is the noblest product of our race". Nor, indeed, can we examine even cursorily the portrait of Him in the Gospels without seeing how entirely free from exaggeration the answer is. I do not now refer to the sublimity of His religious doctrine, of His teaching about God, about God's dealings with ourselves, about our present state and future destiny; nor the lofty purity of His moral law—the most perfect measure of ethical excellence ever presented to mankind. I am concerned only with the fact that He was Himself the most faultless embodiment of that highest of standards which the world has ever seen. It must come as a shock to our feelings of reverence and love for

[1] Mark VIII. 27.

Christ to hear Him spoken of as though He were only man. You will bear with me if I do so for the moment: it is only to demonstrate the more convincingly that He was God as well. As man, then, He gives proof of rare intellectual powers: in His knowledge of all that was best in Jewish learning; in the sublimity and harmony of His own religious and moral views; in the power and aptness of His presentation of them; and in the ease and thoroughness with which He treated the cavillings and questionings of enemies and of friends. To these rare intellectual gifts He joined a singular self-restraint and moderation. Neither in His manner of living, nor in His public speech, nor in His deliberately avowed aims, nor in His more hurried decisions at critical moments of His life, is there any trace of a fanatical spirit, of any interference by enthusiasm and passion with calm judgment and prudent action. And the higher virtues are still more prominent: His entire submission to and love of God the Father, His humility, His unselfishness, His transparent sincerity and truthfulness—to particularize those only which are most relevant to our present purpose. I need not stay to illustrate these characteristics from

the Gospels: they are witnessed to by almost every page. I need not quote for you the testimony of many of the keenest and most impartial judges of human excellence since Christ's time: "It was reserved for Christianity," says Mr. Lecky, in his "History of European Morals," and he may be taken to speak for all educated and thoughtful men, "it was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments, and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind, than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists".

In Christ, therefore, we have, admittedly, a man of rare intelligence, of quite unusual moderation and strength of character, singularly religious-minded, wise, prudent, unassuming, truthful,

endowed with a pre-eminence of moral beauty, which is not merely beyond comparison, but is absolutely without fault. And this Man, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, but always emphatically and persistently, proclaims Himself more than man ; claims, indeed, to be very God Himself ; even lays down His life, rather than withdraw the claim. What are we to think of Him, if the claim be not true ?

And that Christ did put forward the claim, not covertly, not occasionally, but openly, plainly, and continuously, admits of no doubt whatsoever. Let me direct your attention to the following considerations, based entirely upon the Gospel narratives :—

As men grow in holiness or moral worth, as they conceive higher and more perfect rules of conduct, as they impress these loftier standards with an increasing urgency upon the minds of others, so do they acquire a more profound consciousness of their own weakness, their own unworthiness, their own sin ; so do they experience a growing need to confess in some way their failure to realize the perfect ideals which they have conceived and which they preach. Now, there can be no question about the perfection

of the moral standard which Christ professed and taught. Read His Sermon on the Mount and the exhortation: "Be you, therefore, perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect".[1] And yet there is no trace of consciousness that He Himself fell short of the perfection which He preached. There is no admission of any sin, however venial, nor even of liability to sin. He discourses much on sin and sinfulness, on the need of repentance for sins committed, on the danger of sinning to which our nature is exposed. But there is no slightest reference to any bearing of such doctrines upon Himself. Nay, He positively asserts His sinlessness: "I do always the things that please Him that sent Me".[2] He goes further, even, and challenges His enemies to bring any proof of sin against Him. "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?"[3] Surely there is in this a claim to superhuman holiness?

And hence He does what no other teacher has ever ventured to do in the world's history: He openly and persistently preaches Himself. He is not content to preach abstract truths, however beautiful and sublime; He repeatedly and earnestly declares Himself to be their visible embodi-

[1] Matt. v. 48. [2] John VIII. 29. [3] *Ibid.*, 46.

ment. Sometimes in metaphor, sometimes in plain and simple language, He bids men seek salvation in and through Himself. "I am the light of the world,"[1] He tells them; "he that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life." "I am the way, the truth, and the life," He says to them again, "no man cometh to the Father but by Me."[2] And on another occasion: "I am the living bread, which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall have life for ever".[3] And again: "I am the door; by Me if any enter in, he shall be saved".[4] And: "I am the vine, you the branches . . . if any one abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth and shall wither, and they shall gather him up and cast him into the fire".[5] And once again: "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, although he be dead shall live".[6] What merely human teacher has ever dared to preach in such a fashion?

Furthermore, and in the same spirit, He treats men as belonging to Him, as bound unhesitatingly to obey His will. "Come ye after Me,"

[1] John VIII. 12. [2] *Ibid.*, XIV. 6. [3] *Ibid.*, VI. 41.
[4] *Ibid.*, X. 9. [5] *Ibid.*, XV. 5. [6] *Ibid.*, XI. 25.

he says to Peter and Andrew, "and they immediately, leaving their nets, followed Him."[1] To another: "Follow Me . . . and let the dead bury their dead".[2] To Levi, sitting at the receipt of customs: "Follow Me; and, leaving all things, he rose up and followed Him".[3] To the rich young man: "Go, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow Me".[4] His call to discipleship was a command rather than an invitation, and a command which was to be fulfilled at whatever cost of comfort and peace and natural affection: "Think ye that I have come to give peace on earth? I tell ye no, but separation";[5] "He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me";[6] "If any man comes to Me, and hates not father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, he cannot be My disciple".[7] Are such claims of imperative personal allegiance tolerable, are they intelligible even, if He believed Himself to be only man?

Hence He accepts, without protest, simply as His due, the form of worship offered to God

[1] Mark I. 17. [2] Luke IX. 59. [3] *Ibid.*, v. 27.
[4] *Ibid.*, XVIII. 22. [5] *Ibid.*, XII. 51. [6] Matt. X. 38.
[7] Luke XIV. 26.

alone. The woman of Canaan whose daughter was "grievously troubled by a devil . . . came and adored Him, saying: Lord, help me".[1] The mad youth's father "came, falling down on his knees before Him, saying: Lord have pity on my son".[2] When He had calmed the storm, "they that were in the boat came and worshipped Him, saying: Of a truth Thou art the Son of God".[3] Peter, after the miraculous draught of fishes, "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord".[4] The man "blind from his birth," to whom He says: "Dost thou believe in the Son of God?" answers: "I believe, Lord. And, falling down, he adored Him."[5] I quote only a few out of many similar passages. Now, had He believed Himself mere man, a messenger, indeed, from God, but still a merely human one, would He have accepted Divine homage? Even Barnabas and Paul, at Lystra, in like circumstances, "rending their clothes, leaped out among the people crying, and saying: Ye men, why do you these things? We also are mortals, men like unto you."[6]

[1] Matt. xv. 25. [2] *Ibid.*, xvii. 14. [3] *Ibid.*, xiv. 33.
[4] Luke v. 8. [5] John ix. 35. [6] Acts xiv. 14.

Again, He proclaims His independent power to forgive sin: "Be of good heart, son," He says to the man sick of the palsy, "thy sins are forgiven thee"; and, when the Scribes repudiate the implied claim: "He blasphemeth; who can forgive sins but God alone?" He does not disapprove the inference, but goes on to reassert and emphasize the claim: "That you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sin, I say to thee, Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house; and immediately he arose and went his way, in the sight of all".[1] In almost similar language He addresses a sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee: "Thy sins are forgiven; go in peace"; so that, as the Evangelist adds: "They that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves: Who is this that forgives sins also?"[2] And, more astounding still, He asserts His right to communicate to others the power of forgiving which He exercised Himself: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven";[3] "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them".[4]

[1] Matt. IX. 2. [2] Luke VII. 49. [3] Matt. XVIII. 18. [4] John XX. 23.

More startling even in One Who should hold Himself to be only man, He claims to sit in judgment on all mankind: "The Father . . . hath given all judgment to the Son, that all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father,"[1] and "The Son of Man shall come in His majesty and all the Angels with Him; and all the nations shall be gathered together before Him; and He shall separate them one from another".[2] Consider the nature of the office which He here assumes: that He will look out over the countless millions who have ever lived on earth, will search into the innermost recesses of every individual soul, and appraise every thought and word and act of each; that He will determine at once, and with unerring justice, their eternal fate, and proceed to pass sentence irrevocably. Can we conceive of any finite intelligence that shall be equal to the task?

But these claims, after all, it may be said, are indirect. Are they sufficient to convince us that Christ claimed to be Divine? In answer I would only ask you to consider the case of a religious teacher in our own day who should put forward such pretensions. Picture to yourself one who

[1] John v. 22. [2] Matt. xxv. 31.

should discourse much on the weakness of our human nature, its tendency to sin, its inevitable sinfulness; yet seem utterly unconscious that his teaching has the slightest bearing on himself. Let him condemn sin and sinners openly and sternly, so that he arouses the enmity of many adversaries, keen-sighted and influential; and let him challenge them before the world to prove sin against him. Let him add to this the declaration that he does always and in all things God's will. Imagine, further, that he proposes himself to the people as an object of religious faith and love; as the one means by which spiritual life here and eternal happiness hereafter are attainable. He accepts, as of course, the reverence and adoration which are offered to him as to one who is very God himself. He proclaims his right—and acts on it—to call men, in despite of family ties and all earthly interests, when and how he thinks fitting, and to bind them to his service, whatever cost it may entail. And suppose him to declare that by his own power he can forgive all sin, and can commission others to forgive it; that one day he will even come to judge the universe, and apportion to every man his place throughout Eternity; what opinion should we

form of his claims? I do not ask: Should we hold him to be a fool, or should we hold him to be a knave? But should we imagine for a moment that he was claiming only human powers? Should we not understand at once that, knave or madman, he claimed to be Divine?

And Christ, in His statements about Himself, goes far beyond such indirect, though all-sufficient, declarations. He tells the Jews that He existed prior to His human life on earth: "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me".[1] And, again: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven".[2] And, a little later, when the disciples murmur at His Eucharistic teaching, and find it "hard to bear," He confirms the doctrine, and strengthens the incredulous, by the prophetic question: "What, then, if you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?"[3] "I came forth from the Father," He says to them, in His last discourse, "and am come into the world: again I leave the world and I go unto the Father."[4] And, most clearly perhaps of all, when He tells them in the

[1] John vi. 38. [2] *Ibid.*, 51. [3] *Ibid.*, 64.
[4] *Ibid.*, xvi. 28.

Temple: "Your father, Abraham, rejoiced that he might see My day; he saw it, and was glad";[1] and then, in answer to their objection that Abraham was long since dead, while He Himself was still a young man, He declares emphatically: "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am". He claims pre-existence, and not even pre-existence only, but unending, unbeginning, changeless being. For He is One with the Father—One in Divine power: "My sheep hear My voice," He says to the Jews in the porch of Solomon, ". . . and no man shall pluck them out of My hand. My Father, Who hath given them unto Me, is greater than all; and no man can snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and the Father are one."[2] And "the Jews," the Evangelist adds, "took up stones to stone Him . . . because that Thou, being man, maketh Thyself God". He is One in operation with the Father: "My Father worketh until now, and I work. . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you . . . what things soever the Father doth, these the Son also doth in like manner."[3] "Therefore," the Evangelist continues, "the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because . . .

[1] John VIII. 56. [2] *Ibid.*, X. 27. [3] *Ibid.*, V. 17.

He said that God was His own Father, making Himself equal with God." He is One also in identity of uncreated nature: "Lord, show us the Father," Philip says to Him, and He answers: "So long a time have I been with you, and have you not known Me? Philip, he that seeth Me seeth the Father also."[1] And then, addressing all the Apostles: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him; and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him".

More clearly still, in the supreme moments of His earthly life, when He stands before the Sanhedrim, and His enemies are seeking for a pretext to condemn Him, does He profess Himself the Son of God, identical in nature with Him; and He is condemned and dies, because He will not forgo the claim. "And the High Priest said to Him," St. Matthew writes, "I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be Christ, the Son of God." Jesus saith to him: "Thou hast said it".[2] Or, as St. Mark describes the scene: "The High Priest asked Him, and said to Him: Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God? And Jesus said to him: I

[1] John xiv. 9. [2] Matt. xxvi. 63.

am."[1] Now, you will observe that there is no question here of ethical or moral sonship, such as Jew and Christian alike attribute to God's faithful servants and saints. It was no crime in a Jew to call himself "Son of the Blessed God," by service, grace, adoption. Every true Israelite would glory in such a sonship. And Caiaphas sought to entangle Jesus in the confession of a crime. It was natural sonship, involving identity of Divine nature, about which Caiaphas questioned Him; for that claim was a legal crime, and worthy of death, in Jewish law. And so, when Christ's answer had been given, "the High Priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy; what think you? But they answering said: He is guilty of death." They did not think it blasphemy that He should call Himself Son of God, because of some mere ethical relationship. They judged it blasphemy, and condemned Him to a blasphemer's death, because they knew He claimed a literal Divinity. "We have a law," they said, when they carried Him before Pilate, "and, according to the law, He ought to die, be-

[1] Mark xiv. 61.

cause He made Himself the Son of God."[1] Is it not clear, then, that, in these last and most solemn moments of His mortal life, Christ claimed, and was understood to claim, and was condemned to death because He claimed, to be literally and truly God?

Here, then, again, we have most convincing proof of what we may reverently call the Divine self-assertiveness of Christ. He declares in express and unambiguous terms that He existed prior to this earthly life; that He has come down from Heaven, and will return whither He has come; that He and the Father are one in power, operation, nature; that they come into, and dwell together in, the souls of those who love Him; that He Himself is very God, and will die rather than abate His claim. Impossible to deny or to explain away the significance of this language of Christ. Directly and indirectly, literally and by metaphor, by implication and expressly, persistently, almost continuously, He claims to be God Himself.

And if the claim be false, what is He? We must face the issue, though the Christian soul will shudder at the thought. We may face it, since

[1] John xix. 7.

the whole object of these considerations is to prove that the claim is true. If Christ be not God, then He is an impostor; and, if an impostor, then either knave or fool. There is no escape from the dilemma: God or an impostor; and an impostor the maddest or the most criminal whom the world has ever seen. And, since our own whole being, and the conscience of civilized mankind revolt from this latter judgment, a judgment on the human character of Christ; since the Gospel story is utterly irreconcilable with a theory of madness or of fraud; since the world, through all these centuries, has ever looked on Christ as the most perfect pattern of our race; and, since wisdom and moderation and unselfishness and truth shine out from every page of the records of His life, we have no alternative but to admit the claim, and to confess that Christ is very God.

And the second of our arguments, with which we may deal much more briefly, confirms this conclusion to which we have been led; while, even by itself, it will probably appear convincing. On several occasions during Christ's public life His countrymen appealed to Him for miraculous proof of the claim He put forward for Himself

and for His teaching: "Then some of the Scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying: Master, we would see a sign from Thee".[1] And again, "There came to Him the Scribes and Sadducees tempting; and they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven".[2] And, further, "They said to Him: What sign, therefore, dost Thou show, that we may see, and may believe Thee? What dost Thou work?"[3] And when He had driven forth the money-changers from the Temple: "The Jews, therefore, answered and said to Him: What sign dost Thou show unto us, seeing Thou dost these things".[4] Now, it would seem to have been a fixed principle, in the exercise of Christ's powers, that He would work no wonder for purposes of self-defence or self-exaltation. We are not surprised, therefore, that He refused compliance with the request, all the more because He knew and had declared how vain such proofs would be. "Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida," He says of two of the cities in which His miracles of mercy had taken place, "for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works

[1] Matt. xii. 38. [2] *Ibid.*, xvi. 1. [3] John xi. 30.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 18.

that have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and in ashes."[1] But He bade them look forward to a wonder which was to come, and which, when it came, would justify all His claims and teaching. At first He speaks obscurely: "Jesus answered, and said to them—Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up".[2] Later He speaks more clearly, as for instance: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the Prophet".[3] To Peter, James, and John, as they came down from the Mountain of the Transfiguration, He says: "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead".[4] And, most clearly of all, to His disciples, before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and the Scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified; and the third day He shall rise again".[5] He Himself, therefore, appoints His Resurrection, on the third

[1] Matt. xi. 21. [2] John ii. 19. [3] Matt. xii. 39.
[4] *Ibid.*, xvii. 9. [5] *Ibid.*, xx. 18.

day after death, as the test by which His claims are to stand or fall. And they stand unshaken; for, on the third day, He did rise from the dead.

I am not concerned here to prove the evidential value of miracles, or to show that in Christ's Resurrection from the dead, if He did rise, we have a genuine and astounding miracle. I shall assume both propositions. No serious thinker, indeed, of any school of thought disputes either in our day; and not even one will be found among the disciples of the Higher Criticism to admit the reality of the Resurrection of Christ and to deny that admission of His Divinity follows necessarily upon it. Nor is there any need to argue that miracles are possible; if Christ be truly risen from the dead there is an end of argument upon the abstract question. The only controversy which is of present interest to us is concerned with the single fact: Was Christ's promise and prophecy fulfilled in truth? Did He rise again after death? Rationalistic critics deny the fact; Christians universally affirm it.

That the New Testament writings assert it in the most unmistakable language is beyond all doubt. Each one of the Gospels gives a detailed account of its occurrence. It becomes the very

foundation of St. Peter's and St. Paul's preaching, as described in the Acts of the Apostles. The latter, indeed, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians makes the whole structure of Christianity depend on the literal fulfilment of Christ's promise. "If Christ be not risen again," he tells them, "then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have given testimony against God, that He hath raised up Christ."[1] It is clear that the Apostles believed Christ was risen, that they themselves had seen Him frequently, conversed with Him, touched Him, eaten and drunk with Him. Mary and other women, who sought His body in the garden, believed that they had met Him, spoken with Him, worshipped Him. The disciples, on the way to Emmaus, walked with Him, listened to His discourse, recognized Him in the breaking of bread. "Then He was seen by more than 500 brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present and some are fallen asleep,"[2] as St. Paul writes to the Corinthians. "And, last of all, He was seen also by me," St. Paul says, "as by one born out of due time."[3]

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, 6. [3] *Ibid.*, 8.

Now assuming, what we have already proved, the truthfulness of the New Testament writers and the early date of their writings, what escape is there from the conclusion that Christ rose physically, in the body which had died and been buried, from the dead? Among rationalistic theories there are only two which I need mention, the only ones to which, even at first sight, any semblance of probability could attach: the vision theory, in which desire and expectation lead up to imaginary appearances; and the swoon theory, in which Christ is supposed to have fainted upon the Cross, not really to have died at all. But neither theory will bear serious examination. Not the former; for the disciples, assuredly, had no hope of a resurrection; they even refused at first to believe it had occurred. So little did they expect to see the Christ that repeatedly they failed to recognize Him. Sane men do not talk with visions, walk with them, eat with them, handle them. Two, a dozen, five hundred do not see the same imaginary vision at the same time. Nor does a vision roll away a great stone from the entrance to a tomb, or remove a dead body, and leave the tomb empty. Not the latter or swoon theory; for every one of those con-

cerned in Christ's Passion was persuaded of His death—the Centurion, the soldiers, Pilate, His enemies and His friends. So too were Joseph and Nicodemus, who embalmed the body, and the Jews, who set a guard over it. And, if we suppose Christ to have swooned upon the Cross, to have been laid unconscious in the tomb, are we to believe that, on coming to, unaided, He rolled away the great stone, and escaped the soldier guard, and wandered about the garden of the sepulchre? Then, in the early afternoon of the same day, this Man, extenuated by the agony, the scourging, the way of the Cross, with pierced hands and feet and side, after long hours of torture on the uplifted wood, journeys on foot to Emmaus and back to Jerusalem again? And He enters into the supper-room through closed doors; and He appears and disappears at will; and after forty days He ascends into Heaven! And He is an impostor all the while, Who deceives His disciples, and sends them forth, or permits them go forth, to preach a lie, as the foundation of a religion of holiness.

We may, therefore, indeed we are compelled to, accept Christ's Resurrection as a fact of history. And if Christ be risen from the dead,

then Christ is God, and the argument we based upon His character and claims finds its complement and corroboration in the "sign" which He Himself appointed.

Christ, then, is God: and His history proves to us that God exists—whatever may be the value of philosophic demonstrations. Christ is God; and, so, all His teachings and promises and institutions are Divine. One of these Divine institutions we shall next proceed to study: the organized Society or Church which He established.

LECTURE III.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH.

In our last Lecture, we sought to prove the Divinity of Christ, from the claims which He Himself put forward and from His Resurrection—the Divine vindication of Himself and of His work. We collected from the New Testament writings, not from isolated passages which might be made the subject of controversy, but from the whole trend and context of the Gospels, convincing evidence that He claimed deliberately and persistently, throughout the course of His three years' public ministry, to be more than man. And then we argued that a man of His intellectual powers and moral qualities, not fool, not knave, not enthusiast, could never seriously advance a claim, and one of such transcendent greatness, unless it were a true one. Other men put forward claims, and we may feel free, even bound, to reject them. But, when we do reject

them, it is on the ground that those who make them are endeavouring consciously to impose on us, or are themselves imposed upon. We attribute to them some moral or mental failing, a failing greater or less, in proportion to the magnitude of the claim, which they press upon us. But the whole recorded history of Christ's life, its general tenour and its individual details, negatives the idea that consciously or unconsciously he was party to a fraud. There is no indication in the New Testament of any mental weakness or restless enthusiasm in Christ; there is no trace of insincerity or self-seeking. On the contrary, there is abounding proof of lofty intelligence and calm strength of will; there is convincing testimony to His humility, unselfishness, and truth. Besides, the concordant voice of civilized mankind proclaims Christ to be the most perfect type and pattern of our race, a man the wisest, the most virtuous, most straightforward, that the world has ever seen, the most unlikely to be the victim or the author of the most stupendous and most wicked deception in all human history. And so we drew the necessary inference that His claim was warranted, that He was more than man, was very God Himself.

Then, we reflected further that the claim was tested and was vindicated by His resurrection from the dead. When challenged, during life, to justify His extraordinary pretensions, He had repeatedly, and with a growing clearness, referred His questioners to the incidents of His coming death, and above all to His resurrection on the third day. The whole city of Jerusalem was aware of the prophecy; the chief priests and the Pharisees discussed it with Pilate; and to prevent its apparent fulfilment by fraud, "they made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards".[1] But, on the third day, the tomb was empty, and Christ again appeared amongst His disciples and friends, eating, drinking, walking, discoursing with them, as He had done before; inviting them even to examine closely, to see and touch, His risen body, so that there should be no doubt of its reality. And, assuming the good faith of Christ Himself and of the New Testament writers, we were satisfied that Christ did really rise from the dead, and appear to the Disciples. For we cannot doubt that Christ died: the swoon theory involves too many and too grave absurdities. We cannot

[1] Matt. xxvii. 66.

doubt that it was Christ Himself, in His human body, whom the Disciples saw, spoke with, and touched; the theory of visions is an impossible alternative. But, if Christ rose physically from the dead, as He had foretold, then we are compelled, on this ground also, to admit His claim, and to confess that He was more than man, was true God as well.

Now, so much being admitted, it follows that all Christ's teachings, His precepts, His institutions are Divine. They rest on the authority of God. What Christ teaches we must believe, because it is God Who teaches it; where Christ commands we must obey, for it is God commands; what Christ has instituted for us we must accept, because it is God who urges its acceptance on us. If He established a society, that society was Divine; if He entrusted to it a body of doctrines to be taught, those doctrines were Divine; if He appointed in it definite means of sanctification and salvation, those also were Divine; if He bestowed upon it a constitution and authority, constitution and authority were equally Divine. But did He establish a society to preserve and propagate His teachings, to minister special means of sanctification, to live

and work within a constitution and with an authority which He Himself defined?

Christ, as we have seen, is God incarnate. "When the fulness of time was come," St. Paul writes to the Galatians,[1] "God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law." And he adds the reason: "That He might redeem them who were under the law; that we might receive the adoption of sons". We are not, of course, so presumptuous as to think that we know the whole purpose of God in the Incarnation. We know only what He Himself has condescended to make known to us: enough to fill our hearts with wonder and gratitude for His exceeding mercy, and to make us see how little able we are to fathom the mysteries of His providence. But some part of His purpose He has declared to us: "She shall bring forth a Son," the angel says of God's Blessed Mother, "and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins".[2] "The Son of Man is come," Christ Himself says to Zacheus, "to seek and to save that which was lost";[3] and in another place to His Apostles: "The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to

[1] Gal. IV. 4. [2] Luke I. 31. [3] *Ibid.*, XIX. 10.

minister and to give His life a redemption for many".[1] And, again, in St. John: "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting".[2] And, in that wonderful sixth chapter of the same Gospel: "The bread of God is that which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life to the world. . . . I am the bread of life";[3] and, once again, in a later chapter: "I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly".[4] Or read the two first chapters of St. Paul to the Ephesians, where he sums up all the spiritual blessings that have come to us through Christ, and tells us that none has come to us from any other source whatever. Briefly, the purpose of the Incarnation, as made known to us in the New Testament, is that men "may have life" through the passion and death of Christ, and "may have it more abundantly," through His example, His teaching and the sacred channels of grace which He established. He came to save and to sanctify mankind.

And, to do this the more effectually, He

[1] Matt. xx. 28. [2] John iii. 15.
[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 33. [4] *Ibid.*, x. 10.

founded a kingdom. He might, indeed, have worked out partly His purpose in men's souls without drawing them together by any closer bond than their acceptance of Him as a teacher, and their profession of the more important doctrines which He taught. But He was far more than a teacher. There have been others also, who taught a lofty morality, who discoursed wisely and eloquently on the existence and attributes of God, and on man's relation towards Him. Four centuries before Our Lord's coming, Socrates, and Plato, and Aristotle had done as much. And they gathered disciples around them, and impressed their opinions upon them; and these disciples were united together by common doctrines, and by their admiration and love for the teacher from whom they had received them; and they endeavoured, in their turn, to gain adherents for their views and feelings. But it has been well remarked that movements of the kind resulted at best in philosophic schools, in merely accidental groupings of disciples, not organized into a society, not fitted for persistent life, not even planned or built up by the teacher himself. Such a teacher drew men about him, for there was no other way in which they could

learn, or learn so readily, what he taught; and intimacies sprang up, and enthusiasms were aroused, and perhaps a distinctive name was adopted, such as the Academy or the Porch. But there was no close bond of fellowship between the members; there was no common principle of authority, no interchange of service between part and part, no definite direction towards common objects. They were only schools of thought. Their immediate aim was the acquisition of truth; and if at all, it was only by an appeal to reason they could hope to influence conduct.

Christ, on the other hand, is not the founder of a school. He did, indeed, teach, and teach in such wise that His very enemies were compelled to say: "Never did man speak like this Man".[1] But He did a great deal more. Nothing is more remarkable in His history than His persistently avowed intention to found a kingdom. God had had His kingdom upon earth in the days of the Jewish theocracy. It was only national, or nearly so; it lay chiefly in externals; and, long before Christ came, it had passed away. Christ was to restore it, fairer

[1] John VII. 46.

and more perfect. "Thou shalt bring forth a Son," the angel had announced to Mary, His Mother, "and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David, His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end."[1] The teaching of His predecessor, the Baptist, may be summed up in the warning: "Do penance for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand".[2] And, "after that John was delivered up," St. Mark tells us, "Jesus Himself came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand".[3] And St. Matthew adds: "He went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom".[4] Later, when sending forth the twelve on their first apostolic mission, His command was: "Go and preach, saying the Kingdom of heaven is at hand";[5] and He foretold: "These good tidings of the Kingdom shall be preached throughout the whole world, for a testimony unto all the nations".[6] When the people of Capharnaum "stayed Him that He

[1] Luke I. 32. [2] Matt. III. 2. [3] Mark I. 15.
[4] Matt. IV. 23. [5] *Ibid.*, X. 7. [6] *Ibid.*, XXIV. 14.

should not depart from them," He said: "To other cities also I must preach the Kingdom of God; for therefore am I sent".[1] To one of His disciples, Peter, after the Confession of Cesarea Philippi, He promised supreme authority in the Kingdom: "And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven".[2] But I need not accumulate quotations: so persistently and so publicly did He declare His design that, when the chief priests and scribes carried Him before Pilate, they opened their accusations against Him with the words: "We found this man perverting our nation . . . and saying that He Himself is Christ, a King".[3] "Art Thou a King then?" Pilate asks Him; and Christ admits and emphasizes the charge: "Thou sayest that I am a King"—the equivalent in Hebrew idiom of an earnest "I am". So "the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His head, and arrayed Him in a purple garment: and they came unto Him, and they said: Hail, King of the Jews".[4] "And Pilate wrote a title, also, to put it on the Cross, and there was written, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."[5]

[1] Luke IV. 43. [2] Matt. XVI. 19. [3] Luke XXIII. 2.
[4] John XIX. 2. [5] *Ibid.*, 19.

Now, what was the nature of this Kingdom over which Christ claimed to be the King? The Jews generally, both the people and their rulers, understood it to be an earthly commonwealth, which should restore the glories of David and of Solomon, and give them freedom from the Roman yoke. Therefore, they cried out, when Pilate would dismiss Christ: "If thou release this man thou art not Cæsar's friend; for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar".[1] Even the disciples themselves at first shared the same belief. They contended one with the other who should hold first place in it. The mother of the sons of Zebedee beseeches Christ: "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand and the other on Thy left in Thy kingdom".[2] And, after His very death and resurrection, their thoughts are still fixed upon a temporal state. "Lord," they ask of Him, "wilt Thou, at this time, restore again the Kingdom to Israel?"[3] But such a kingdom, it is clear, Our Lord had never thought of founding; or, if He had thought of it at all, it was only to reject it. The very titles which He constantly employs, "Kingdom

[1] John XIX. 12. [2] Matt. XX. 21. [3] Acts I. 6.

of heaven," "Kingdom of God," show conclusively how unearthly His kingdom was to be. During the course of His public life He put aside repeatedly the suggestion that He should assume or exercise temporal authority. When He "knew that they were about to come and take Him by force, to make Him King, He fled again," St. John tells us, "into the mountain Himself alone".[1] He refused, even when appealed to, to act the part of civil arbitrator or judge: "Man," He replies to one of the brothers who were at variance, "who hath appointed Me judge or divider over you?"[2] He would not be entrapped into a condemnation of the tribute which the Romans had imposed; He even paid it for Himself. He would allow no recourse to arms, even in His own defence. And so He assured Pilate: "My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My Kingdom is not from hence."[3] Indeed, nothing is more certain from the story of the Gospels than that His countrymen delivered Him to the Romans and clamoured for His death, because, while

[1] John VI. 15. [2] Luke XII. 14. [3] John XVIII. 36.

claiming to be a King, and announcing His determination to found a Kingdom, He utterly repudiated the material, temporal ideals to which His countrymen still clung.

He was resolved, then, to establish a Kingdom, though not after the pattern of earthly Kingdoms, not one which should own territory, and issue coinage, and wage war, and defend the sovereign by the weapons of force. His Kingdom was to be spiritual.

But it was also to be upon earth. Though "of God," "of Heaven," it is not to be in Heaven; or if it be, it is only to be perfected and consummated there. Though not "of the world," it is to be in this world; men and women are to be already citizens of it, while here; it is to exist alongside the kingdoms of the earth, commingled with them, composed of the same members who constitute them. "The time is accomplished, and the Kingdom of God is at hand,"[1] Our Lord declares, at the very opening of His public life, where the reference cannot, surely, be understood to a Kingdom beyond the grave. And when He sent the seventy-two Disciples "into every city and place whither He

[1] Mark i. 15.

Himself was to come, He said to them . . . say . . . the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you".[1] And, on another occasion: "I tell you of a truth: There are some standing here who shall not taste death, till they see the Kingdom of God".[2] And to the Pharisees, who had asked Him: "When the Kingdom of God should come," He answered them and said: "The Kingdom cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say: Behold here or behold there. For lo, the Kingdom of God is within you."[3] So that St. Paul could write to the Colossians: "Giving thanks to God the Father Who hath . . . delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of the Son of His love".[4] No wonder the Apostles looked for a kingdom to be established in their own day, and visible to their earthly eyes: "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom?" they ask of Him, as we have seen, even after the forty days during which He had "appeared to them, speaking of the Kingdom of God".[5]

But it may be objected that, in all these passages, and in the many others in which Our Lord

[1] Luke x. 9. [2] Mark viii. 39. [3] Luke xvii. 21.
[4] Coloss. i. 13. [5] Acts i. 3.

discourses on the Kingdom, He is referring to His Empire over men's minds and hearts, to the new tone and temper of soul which His teaching and example are to create among His followers. It is to be, as He Himself says, and as we have already quoted Him, "within" men; it is to come noiselessly and "not with observation"; it is to be maintained by spiritual, not carnal weapons. Why, are we to think of it, or are we to think of it, as an external, visible organization? The answer is at once obvious and undoubted: unlike the kingdoms of earth, Christ's kingdom here is at the same time visible and invisible. He desires to rule not merely, not mainly, over men's bodies and external acts. He wishes to govern through conscience, and to reach men's souls—their minds, and hearts, and wills. He declares the spirit of the Kingdom in that marvellous exposition of the highest moral and religious life—the Sermon on the Mount, which contrasts so sharply the external observances of the Mosaic law with the new dispensation of holiness in motive, thought, desire, conformity of will. But, while this is so, and while in this sense the Kingdom is in the souls of men, it is equally certain that it is also external. The very name of "Kingdom,"

when used of and among men, implies a visible organization. So also do the names "city," "shepherd," "family," and others, under which Our Lord describes His kingdom in the parables. And, further, confession of Him "before men" is the condition of His confessing His followers before His Father who is in heaven. This public confession will cause them to be "brought before kings and rulers" and to be "reviled and persecuted," for His name's sake. They are to be initiated into the kingdom by an outward, visible Baptismal rite. They are to make oral profession of the same religious creed. They are to meet together to share in a common Eucharistic meal. They are placed under the guidance and government of a body of visible teachers and rulers, especially selected and prepared by Christ, to whom He says, when giving them their commission: "He that receiveth you receiveth Me,"[1] and "As the Father hath sent Me so I also send you".[2] These men, so invested with authority, form the first believers everywhere into visible communities to which they appoint laws of faith, conduct, and religious worship. These communities are knit together in belief and charity; and are sub-

[1] Matt. x. 40. [2] John xx. 21.

ject to the same disciplinary precepts, drawn up and imposed on all by the first Council in Jerusalem. Does not all this signify plainly that the Kingdom, while spiritual in object, means, and motives, was to be also visible as an outward visible organization?

And it was to be universal. Unlike the Jewish theocracy, and unlike every other kingdom established before or since, it was not to be narrowed down to any place or people. Men everywhere were invited to become citizens. "To what shall we liken the Kingdom of heaven?" Our Lord asks the multitude, as He taught them from the ship by the shore of Genesareth, "or to what parable shall we compare it? It is a grain of mustard seed; which when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that are in the earth. And when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the birds of the air may dwell under the shadow thereof."[1] And so He foretells that "repentance and remission of sins shall be preached in His name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem,"[2] and He says to the Apostles: "You shall receive the power

[1] Mark IV. 30. [2] Luke XXIV. 47.

of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, and all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth".[1] And He gives them an express command: "Go ye, therefore, into the whole world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature". "But they going forth," St. Mark adds, "preached everywhere";[2] and St. Paul writes of them to the Romans: "Yes, verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world";[3] and again to the Colossians: "of the truth of the Gospel, which is come unto you, as also it is in the whole world, and bringeth forth fruit and groweth".[4] But, indeed, the universality of the Kingdom is a necessary consequence of its foundation for the redemptive and sanctifying work of Christ. Christ had come, we have seen, to redeem and sanctify mankind; and no human being was excluded from His mercy. "He was the true light," as St. John says, "which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world."[5] God "spared not even His own Son," St. Paul tells the Romans, "but delivered Him up for us all".[6]

[1] Acts I. 8. [2] Mark XVI. 20. [3] Rom. X. 18.
[4] Col. I. 5. [5] John I. 9. [6] Rom. VIII. 32.

And, again, he writes to the Corinthians: "If one died for all, then, all were dead; and Christ died for all".[1] But it is through citizenship of the Kingdom that men are to be saved, that the fruits of the Redemption are to be bestowed upon them; and so the Kingdom, in the Divine plan, was to be co-extensive with the needs of men, and with the distribution of Christ's benefits among them.

It was also to be independent. It was not to be an earthly Kingdom; still less a department or function of any civil State. Its founder was God Himself; its objects were defined by Him; the bonds uniting all its members were fixed by Him; the officers who should rule over it were of His own appointment; the limits of their authority, the principles of their government, He Himself laid down. It was the Apostles, not temporal princes, whom He sent to preach, and to baptize; it was only to the Apostles He gave power to forgive sin and to reproduce the Eucharist; it was only the Apostles who received authority to say: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things".[2] Nor

[1] 2 Cor. v. 14. [2] Acts xv. 28.

did He call kings or princes into consultation; or even hint to His Apostles that, in the fulfilment of their mission, they were to wait on any secular approval or consent. And so much we might have looked for. If the Kingdom is a spiritual one, if it comes into being for the saving and the sanctifying of men's souls, if the faith it teaches, the means of salvation it employs, are superhuman and supernatural, then we should not expect it to be left dependent, for its action and its very existence, on any earthly power. And its universality precludes such dependence. If the Kingdom is to be a world-wide society, with a common faith, and common religious rites, and common government, it can neither be identified with nor subject to any local state. And that, all the less, if, as Christ warned His Apostles, when preparing them to carry out His plan, they were sure to meet with opposition from the great ones of the world. "If they have persecuted Me, so will they persecute you,"[1] He tells them; and "They will deliver you up in Councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall be brought before governors and before kings for My sake, for a

[1] John xv. 20.

testimony to them and to the Gentiles. . . . The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord."[1] There was no civil authority on the earth, when Our Lord was laying the foundation of His kingdom, from which He might look for favour or support, or even toleration. Is it, therefore, likely He would give civil authorities the right to frustrate His Divine plan? His Apostles had scarcely entered on the work for which He had prepared them when "the priests and the officers of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being grieved that they taught the people . . . and they laid hands upon them and put them in hold till the next day. . . . And it came to pass, on the morrow, that their princes and ancients and scribes were gathered together . . . and setting them in the midst they asked: By what power, or by what name, have you done this? . . . And they conferred among themselves, saying: What shall we do to these men? . . . And, calling them, they charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus"[2]; and when "Peter and the Apostles answering, said: We must obey God rather than men . . . they were

[1] Matt. x. 17. [2] Acts iv. 1.

cut to the heart, and they thought to put them to death".[1] This was the temper of the kingdoms of the world towards the new Kingdom of Christ, the temper which showed itself in the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul and of others of the Apostles, and in the persecutions of the early Church. No wonder that the exercise of apostolic powers should not be made dependent on the temporal state.

Christ, then, designed to establish a kingdom upon earth, a kingdom which should be spiritual in its objects and in the means of attaining them, yet visible in the living men and women who are members of it, and in the bonds by which they are united; universal, too, in its extension to every country and to every race; and self-contained, by the possession of all the authority which is needed to work out its purpose, without hindrance or interference from any earthly power. But did He execute His design? Let the New Testament writings answer. We read there how He Himself, by His doctrines and His precepts, framed, as it were, its constitution and promulgated its laws; how, preaching through Galilee and Judea, He collected adherents for

[1] Acts v. 29.

it; how He prepared and provided for its development and organization. For He selected, we are told, a chosen few from among the larger number of His disciples; and during a period estimated generally at about three years, He kept them habitually near His own person, and taught and trained them with an especial care. "He appointed twelve," St. Mark says, "that they might be with Him and that He might send them forth to preach."[1] The fullness and clearness of their instruction He Himself declared, when He says to them: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to them that are without all things are done in parables".[2] They could question Him as they willed. They had His example always before their eyes. And, at the close of His public life, He could say to them, as St. John relates: "All things whatsoever I have heard from My Father I have made known to you".[3] Then He sent them forth, at first into the Jewish villages and towns; later, into the whole world: "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them

[1] Mark III. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, IV. 11. [3] John XV. 15.

to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you".[1] To authorize their mission, "He gave them power to heal sickness and to cast out devils".[2] He even promised that "signs shall follow them that believe; in My name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and the sick shall recover".[3] And He declared in the most emphatic terms the grave obligation, imposed upon all to whom opportunity was given, of listening to and accepting "the Gospel of the Kingdom". "Into what city soever you enter, and they receive you," He tells them, ". . . heal the sick that are therein, and say to them the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city you enter, and they receive you not, going forth into the streets thereof say: Even the very dust of your city that cleaveth to us we wipe off against you. Yet know this that the Kingdom of God is at hand. I say to you it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that city. . . . He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth

[1] John xxviii. 19. [2] Mark iii. 15. [3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 17.

Me."[1] Later, when about to ascend from them, and when He was entrusting to them their world-wide mission: "Preach the Gospel to every creature," He added to it the solemn sanction: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned".[2] But they were not to preach only; they were to govern as well. "As the Father hath sent Me, so I also send you,"[3] He says to them; and we would seem justified in understanding the commission not merely of objects which are identical, but also of similar authority and powers. More clearly still, in that passage from St. Matthew, which we have already quoted: "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven";[4] where He appears to except nothing from the authority which He confers on them. Again, after describing how, by personal persuasion and admonition, they should strive to gain an erring brother's soul, He goes on to say that, if all else fail, they must invoke the Church: "If he will not hear . . . tell the Church; and if

[1] Luke x. 8. [2] Matt. xvi. 16.
[3] John xx. 21. [4] Matt. xviii. 18.

he will not hear the Church"—will not obey its God-given authority—"then let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican".[1] Last of all, after His resurrection, when "He showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias,"[2] and claimed from St. Peter the triple confession of love, He commanded, He seemed to adjure, him, after each confession, to "feed"—to teach, that is, and govern—His lambs and sheep. Hence it was that St. Paul could say to the elders or presbyters of Ephesus and Miletus: "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you Bishops, to rule the Church of God".[3] Hence, he writes to the Corinthians, and lays down for them a series of ritual and moral laws, concluding with the words: "The rest I will set in order, when I come".[4] And, again, in a second letter to them, after various warnings and exhortations: "Therefore," he says to them, "I write these things being absent, that being present I may not deal more sternly, according to the authority which the Lord hath given me for building up".[5] And the writer of the Epistle to the

[1] Matt. xviii. 17. [2] John xxi. 1. [3] Acts xx. 28.
[4] 1 Cor. xi. 24. [5] 2 Cor. xiii. 10.

Hebrews: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them; for they watch, as being to render an account of your souls".[1] Indeed, the Acts of the Apostles and the Apostolic Letters present us with repeated instances of a like nature, instances in which the Apostles, collectively, as in the Council of Jerusalem, or individually, as must have been generally the case, drew up and promulgated for the acceptance of the faithful, not merely doctrinal and moral teachings, but disciplinary enactments, which the faithful were bound and were expected to obey.

And, lastly, he sent the Apostles, not to preach and to govern only; they were also authorized and commissioned to administer religious rites. They were to preach the Gospel, and then admit believers into the Church by the Sacramental ceremony of Baptism. They were to exhort to penance, and then absolve or loose the penitent from the bonds of sin. They were to imitate Christ, Who at the Last Supper, "taking bread, gave thanks and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is My Body, which is broken for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me."[2] I would not, of course, be taken to mean that

[1] Heb. xiii. 17. [2] Luke xxii. 19.

they received no other Sacramental powers: the laying on of hands, for instance, so often referred to in the Acts of the Apostles, is evidence to the contrary. But I have preferred examples which lie as it were on the surface of the Gospels, and are not open to serious controversy among those who believe in the Divinity of Christ.

The Apostles, therefore, in continuation of Christ's own mission upon earth were to teach all men what Christ had taught themselves. They were to govern with His Divine authority all those who listened to their message, and accepted the doctrines which they preached. They were to initiate believers into the Christian community by the sacred rite of Baptism, purify them, on repentance, from whatever sins they might commit, and strengthen and sanctify them by the Eucharist. This was the work which Christ gave them to do; it was for this He prepared and trained them. This was to build on the foundations which He had laid; to give visible substance and shape to His Divine plan. And with what success did they labour? On the day of Pentecost, after Peter's first discourse in Jerusalem, "they that received his word were

baptized, and there were added . . . about three thousand souls".[1] Some days later, after the miracle on the lame man at the Temple gate, "many of them, who had heard the Word, believed; and the number of the men was made five thousand".[2] A little later still, "the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord was more increased".[3] "Behold you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine," the High Priest says to "Peter and the Apostles,"[4] when they were dragged before the Council. And about the same time, "The word of the Lord increased, and the number of the disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly: a great multitude also of the priests obeyed the faith".[5] Philip goes down to the City of Samaria, and "the people with one accord were attentive to those things which were said by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. . . . But when they had believed Philip preaching of the Kingdom of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."[6] Some of those who were "dispersed by the persecution that arose on occasion of Stephen . . . when

[1] Acts II. 41. [2] *Ibid.*, IV. 4. [3] *Ibid.*, V. 14.
[4] *Ibid.*, V. 28. [5] *Ibid.*, VI. 7. [6] *Ibid.*, VIII. 6.

they were entered into Antioch, spoke also to the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them ; and a great number believing was converted to the Lord. And the tidings came to the ears of the Church that was at Jerusalem . . . and they sent Barnabas as far as Antioch . . . and a great multitude was added to the Lord".[1] Paul and Barnabas came to Iconium in Lycaonia, and "they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and they so spoke that a very great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks did believe".[2] In Thessalonica, "where there was a synagogue of the Jews, Paul, according to his custom, went in unto them, and for three Sabbath days he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures . . . and some of them believed, and were associated to Paul and Silas ; and of these that served God and of the Gentiles a great multitude ; and of noble women not a few".[3] But why multiply quotations? Those already made are concerned with Peter and John, Paul and Barnabas, alone ; they describe only a few incidents in their activity. Meanwhile the other Apostles are at work elsewhere, and, with such results, that St. Paul in

[1] Acts XI. 19. [2] *Ibid.*, XIV. 1. [3] *Ibid.*, XVII. 4.

writing to the Romans, within about twenty-five years of Our Lord's death, is able to say to them: "I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is spoken of in the whole world".[1] And so it grew, the grain of mustard seed which the Lord had taken and "sowed in His field; and it grew and became a great tree, so that the birds of the air came and dwelt in the branches thereof".[2] Surely, we have in all this the foundation of a kingdom. Christ Himself proclaims His design to found one. By His doctrines and precepts He promulgates its constitution. In His missionary journeys He gains adherents for it. By His Apostles He carries on and extends His teaching, He provides for the administration of His laws, He secures the dispensation of His Sacraments. He gathers together a multitude of subjects under His own and the Apostles' authority. Have we not here all the elements of an organized society, such as we see in the kingdoms of the world around us—a multitude of persons, drawn together for a common purpose, bound together by common interests and methods, guided and moved by a common authority and government?

[1] Rom. I. 8. [2] Matt. XIII. 31.

Are we not justified in saying that Christ Himself, by His own labours, and by the labours of His Apostles, the workers whom He had trained, did found and build up for Himself a kingdom upon earth? And this kingdom we call the Christian Church—a title He bestowed on it Himself, when He said to one of His Apostles: "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona . . . Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church".[1]

The Christian Church, therefore, is a Divine institution. It is not a voluntary association, which the first believers, or those who immediately succeeded them, were left at liberty to form, and did form, for purposes of mutual sympathy and assistance. So far as we can gather Christ's mind and plan, from His recorded words and acts, He was no less resolved to establish an organized society than He was to save and sanctify individual souls; souls, indeed, were to be saved and sanctified through their membership of the society. The society, no doubt, was instituted for the members; but membership, as we shall see, was made binding by Him on all the followers of Christ.

[1] Matt. xvi. 18.

We have seen, then, that the Church was conceived and established by God Himself; for Christ was very God. It may be of interest now to consider, for a moment, how far the conception and foundation of the Church will serve as an argument for the Divinity of Christ. It is, I think, conclusive. For let us suppose Christ to be merely man; and what are the facts we are called on to explain? He is a Galilean villager, from an obscure little town, of which it is proverbially said: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"[1] He is poor, illiterate, untravelled. He has not frequented any schools of learning, has not had correspondence with great thinkers or opportunity to read their works, has not associated with persons of refined manners and gentle blood. He has no acquaintance with the philosophies of Greece or Rome. He has, probably, never even heard the names of the leaders of thought or literature in contemporary centres of civilization. He has hitherto spent His life in commonplace manual labour, in the midst of a village community, poor, for the most part, and illiterate as Himself. And suddenly, without preparation, He leaves the

[1] John i. 46.

workman's shop, with its uncultured surroundings, and appears before the world as a great religious and moral teacher—admittedly the greatest whom the world has ever seen. He puts forward a scheme of religious belief and a theory of moral conduct more sublime, more harmonious, more fitted to upraise and ennoble mankind than anything which the wisest philosophy has ever dreamed of. He announces His intention of establishing a world-wide spiritual kingdom—an idea utterly foreign to the mind both of Gentile and of Jew; and He promulgates at once its constitution, its laws, its government. His intention, His plan itself, undergo no revision, are subjected to no experiment. They are already complete when He first makes them known. And His design is so perfect, the means He adopts to realize it so fitted for the purpose, that, contrary to all human likelihood and expectation, He achieves the success which He had predicted. And I am not now arguing from the success which He achieved, but from the scheme which He so confidently set before the world for its acceptance. Accepted by the world or rejected, it could never have been even conceived by the peasant artisan

of Nazareth, had He been man only. Its very conception, the design which He announced, is conclusive proof of His Divinity.

We shall pass on to consider next some characteristics of the kingdom or Church which Christ established.

LECTURE IV.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH: IMPERISHABLE, ONE, OBLIGATORY.

We have seen that the New Testament writings, especially the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and greater Epistles of St. Paul, are historical documents of the highest value, for whose authenticity and accuracy we have the fullest critical guarantees. When we study in these writings the life and character of Jesus Christ, we are led inevitably to the conclusion that Christ is God; and that consequently His teaching, His promises, and His institutions are Divine. The Christian Church, therefore, is Divine; for it was designed and established by Christ Our Lord. It had been foretold, at His Conception, that, "The Lord God shall give Him the throne of David, His father . . . and of His Kingdom there shall be no end".[1] The Precursor had come, preach-

[1] Luke i. 32.

ing "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand".[1] He began His own public ministry by announcing the advent of the Kingdom. He selected Apostles, and trained them, and sent them forth to preach the Kingdom. His declared intention of founding a Kingdom was the main charge alleged against Him by the Jews, when they coerced Pilate to condemn Him. And, far from denying the accusation, He admitted and emphasized it, was put to death because of it, and had it fastened to the Cross above His head, as though to explain and justify the sentence passed upon Him. But His Kingdom was not to be of this world. It was, indeed, to be in the world; and its citizens were to be at the same time citizens of temporal states. And it was to be visible, not only as composed of men and women, but as held together by the external profession of the same faith, by external communion in the same religious rites and ceremonies, and by obedience to the same visible authority. He Himself, even after He had ascended from the eyes of men, was to remain always the one supreme Governor of the Kingdom. Its objects, its methods, the means which it employed, the

[1] Matt. III. 2.

motives it appealed to, were to be all primarily spiritual. And, because spiritual, it was to be universal. It was to be co-extensive with Christ's work of Redemption and sanctification. All men, everywhere, were to be called into the Kingdom. And therefore it could be subject, as of right, to no earthly State. Christ's mission, Christ's work for souls, was not to be dependent on this world's rulers.

We have seen, too, that Christ's design was carried into execution. The Apostles whom He trained, to whom He made known His plan, whom He sent forth to realize it, did achieve His purpose. In spite of the utter improbability of the scheme itself, in spite of their own natural unsuitability for the work, in spite of the earnest opposition of Gentile and of Jew, they built up, within twenty-five years of Christ's death, just such a spiritual organization as Christ had marked out for them ; a widely extended society, numbering many thousands of devoted adherents, scattered throughout the Empire and beyond its limits, all united in one common faith, common religious privileges and worship, common law of discipline, promulgated or prescribed for them by the College of Apostles. And this Divine

society we call, after its Divine founder, the Christian Church.

We now go on to consider its more important characteristics.

And, first, Christ willed it to be imperishable: He willed it to endure on earth so long as there are souls of men on earth to be saved and sanctified. We might infer so much from its very foundation, even had not Christ expressly declared it. It must seem in the highest degree improbable that an institution designed by Him for the salvation of mankind should ever perish wholly from the earth, while there are souls upon it to be saved. God became incarnate in Christ for love of souls; He trained and sent forth the Apostles, and laid the foundations of the Church, to carry on His work for souls. That work has to be done until the end of time. Is it likely He should desire or even suffer the total destruction of a scheme which He had Himself drawn out so admirably, and set up so laboriously, for the objects He had in view? He might, indeed, have established an institution which should serve a merely temporary purpose, and then pass away, as the Jewish Dispensation passed, making room for something different and more perfect.

But the burden of proof lies with those who suggest the theory; and there is no indication of any such intention in the records of His life. Nor is there any reason for supposing that a revealed religion must be subject to continuous change and evolution. We understand readily enough that the Incarnation should mark the beginning of a new era in religious beliefs and religious organization. If God comes down to earth and lives, a man amongst men, to regenerate mankind, we should expect Him to teach religion and moral truth more fully than it had been ever taught before, to provide new and more efficacious means of sanctification, to arrange for perpetuating His doctrines, and for the continued distribution of His graces. And, unless warned to the contrary, we should probably look upon His work as final; we should not expect any change of essential plan, still less a complete failure. We should be prepared for developments in harmony with the original design, for a better understanding of old truths, for fresh inferences from revealed doctrines, for the condemnation of new errors, and for the modification of mere disciplinary laws in accordance with changing social conditions. But we should

scarcely expect any new revelation to the Church at large, or any vital change in the means of sanctification, or a new form of government. We cannot, however, argue conclusively from what Our Lord's intention might have been, or even from what we should naturally conjecture it to be. What God has in fact appointed we can only know with certainty from what He Himself has chosen to tell us; and so we turn to the New Testament records for a clear manifestation of His will. And we find it there, beyond all reasonable doubt. You remember Christ's parable of the cockle—of the weed pushing up among the good wheat, and of the owner's order to his servants: "Suffer both to grow until the harvest"?[1] "Having sent away the multitude He came into the house," St. Matthew continues, "and His disciples came to Him saying: Expound to us the parable of the cockle of the field. Who made answer and said to them: He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man. And the field is the world. And the good seed are the children of the Kingdom. And the cockle are the children of the wicked one. . . . But the harvest is the end of the world. . . . At the end of the world the Son of

[1] Matt. XIII. 30.

Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all scandals and them that work iniquity."[1] The Kingdom, therefore, which Christ preached, the Church which He established, is to remain until the end of the world. And again, Christ tells them: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea, and gathering together of all kind of fishes . . . so shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just".[2] The Kingdom is, therefore, to endure until the end of the world comes. There is question in both parables, on Our Lord's own showing, of a Kingdom in this present world; of a visible Kingdom not constituted by the men and women only who invisibly are God's; and of a Kingdom which is to last, one and the same, until Christ comes to judge us. And consider His promise to St. Peter, in return for the confession of His Divinity: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church".[3] You will recollect a striking picture, which Christ drew, earlier in His public life, of a "wise man that built his house upon a rock, and the rain fell, and the floods

[1] Matt. XIII. 36. [2] *Ibid.*, 47. [3] *Ibid.*, XVI. 18.

came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock".[1] He would almost seem to have the picture in mind when addressing Peter, and to promise stability and perpetuity to His Church by the very form of words in which He describes its approaching foundation. But He goes on to add, in even plainer language: "Upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell"—death, that is, or all the power of her enemies—"shall not prevail against her". And they could not, it is clear, prevail more triumphantly against her than by compassing her destruction utterly, or—what is practically the same thing—by introducing any substantial change into the constitution of the Church, as Christ established it. Again, when He sent out the Apostles to build up the Kingdom by preaching to every creature, He encouraged them with the promise: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world".[2] In what sense He would be with them we need not seek to determine here. It is enough for our present purpose to note His solemn assurance that He would be with His Apostles until "the con-

[1] Matt. VII. 24. [2] *Ibid.*, XXVIII. 20.

summation of the world": with those individual men, therefore, whom He was then sending forth, and not less with their successors, who should carry on and develop the work to which He sent them. And hence the Apostles went out upon their mission, and laboured in it, without any thought that their success could be at best of only a temporary character, that the Church would perish or become transformed, before the end of all things came. On the contrary, they formed believers into organized communities, which were linked together by a common Faith, the same sacred rites, and one supreme government; and they made provision for the indefinite continuance of their work. There are, no doubt, passages in their writings which may seem to imply that they expected the "parousia," or second coming, of the Saviour, at no very distant date. But their care to organize the infant Church on an enduring basis would suggest a different interpretation of the texts; and in any case they were clearly of opinion that until Christ did come again the Church should not cease to exist. St. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, when he had impressed on them the truth of Christ's resurrection, and the hope

we build on it, goes on to add: "By a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. . . . Then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the Kingdom to God and the Father, when He shall have brought to naught all principality, and power, and virtue. For He must reign."[1] And, again, in his letter to the Ephesians, where he sets before them the Church under his favourite figure of Christ's body, he tells them how "He gave some Apostles and some Prophets and some Evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all meet into the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ".[2] The Church, therefore, with her apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers, will continue to exist and to carry on the work of the ministry, while there are saints to be perfected, and men to be guided into the knowledge and the stature of the fullness of Christ. But there is no need to dwell further on the point. All men of whatever school of religious thought, if they admit that Christ estab-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 24. [2] Eph. iv. 11.

lished a visible society, admit also that He gave to it a promise of permanence until the end of time.

His Church, then, is imperishable, is to last, that is, without any substantial change, until Christ Himself comes again.

It must be also one. Christ did not plan, neither did He and His Apostles establish, a plurality of religious societies, each independent of, perhaps conflicting with, the others. He called all men, and He sent His Apostles to call them, into one single organization, the members of which were to be closely joined together in one faith, one worship, the same Sacraments, one form and system of government. "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."[1] "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."[2] The Apostles are to teach everywhere one and the same body of Divine truths, revealed to them by Christ, and by His Holy Spirit. They are to make known everywhere one and the same body of Divine laws; they are to receive into the Kingdom,

[1] Matt. xviii. 19. [2] Mark xvi. 16.

by the same Divinely appointed rite of Baptism, all who profess their willingness to believe and to obey; they are to break unto all the same Eucharistic bread; they are to exercise towards all the Divine power of loosing and of binding; they are to feed and rule over all the lambs and sheep. There would seem to be all the elements of a single social body here, of a social body one in number and organically one. Again, the Church is almost always spoken of by Our Lord as "the Kingdom"; and scarcely any other metaphor could have been chosen by Him more suited to express the twofold oneness we attribute to it. It is not a federation of independent States; it is not composed of loosely compacted parts. A similar idea is presented to us by the other titles which He gives it: "a city," "a household," "a sheepfold," "a flock," "a people"; by the parables of the "field," the "net," the "grain of mustard seed"; and most clearly by Our Lord's own declaration to the Jews: "Other sheep I have that are not of this fold; them also I must bring; and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd".[1] Where you will note that there is not question of a

[1] John x. 16.

mere wish or hope, put forward however earnestly by Christ, nor of a mere precept enjoined by Him on His followers, but of a prediction and a promise, which of necessity carry fulfilment with them. Indeed, as Our Lord Himself argued on another occasion, and in reference to "the Kingdom": "Every Kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand".[1] And hence His phrase to St. Peter: "Upon this rock I will build My Church . . . and I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven".[2] "My Church," "My Kingdom," is to be one and to be placed under one visible authority or ruler. This, too, is the conception of the Church which the Apostles received from Christ Our Lord. We find them everywhere establishing local Churches—in Rome, in Corinth, at Ephesus, Colossa, Thessalonica, and many other places. But they had no thought of founding independent congregations. The members of each local Church communicated not only with each other, but also with the members of all other local Churches, as opportunity arose. Antioch sent alms by Paul and Barnabas to the Church of Jerusalem; so did the Churches

[1] Matt. XII. 25. [2] *Ibid.*, XVI. 18.

of Macedonia, of Corinth, and Galatia. From Antioch, too, it was "determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others . . . should go up to the apostles and priests of Jerusalem about the question" of subjecting the Gentiles to the Mosaic law.[1] St. Paul is accompanied to Troas by "Sopater, the son of Pyrrhus of Berea, and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus;"[2] and, on the first day of the week, they all assembled together "to break bread". Paul, again, in his letter to the Romans commends to them "Phebe our sister, who is a servant of the Church that is in Cenchreæ; that you receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that you assist her in whatever business she shall have need of you".[3] And, after various personal salutations, he adds: "All the Churches of Christ salute you". "To the Church of God that is at Corinth," he writes: "The Churches of Asia salute you; Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the Church that is in their house. . . . All the brethren salute you."[4] And he informs us, in his second letter to the same

[1] Acts xv. 2. [2] *Ibid.*, xx. 4.
[3] Rom. xvi. 1. [4] 1 Cor. xvi. 19.

Corinthians, that it was quite usual for the Christians of that day, when journeying from place to place, to carry with them commendatory letters from their own to other Churches. These first Christian communities, then, looked on themselves as parts of one great whole, bound together by belief, religious practice, common authority. They already formed one widespread carefully organized society. Nor, indeed, could it well be otherwise, if they had any regard for apostolic teaching. The duty of charity, of mutual love, we should, of course, expect the Apostles to preach: it was to be the distinctive mark of true disciples. And, when fulfilled, it would lead necessarily to that union among believers, which Our Lord desired for them so ardently, and prayed for so earnestly: "I pray for them (the Apostles). . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me, that they may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee; that they also may be one in Us."[1] But the Apostles taught union also of another kind, the union which draws together the citizens of a social state. "I beseech you, brethren, by the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, that you will

[1] John xvii. 20.

speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you," St. Paul writes to the Corinthians.[1] And to the Romans: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and to avoid them; for they that are such serve not Christ Our Lord".[2] So all-important is the duty of union and peace within the Churches, and still more, therefore, within the Church universal, and so grievous the sin of any who would disturb it, that such disturbers are to be shunned, cut off, that is, from the communion of the faithful. Hence, in nearly all his letters, notably in those to the Corinthians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians, St. Paul urges this union so earnestly on his converts: "I, therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you, that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called. . . . Careful to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one spirit: as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all."[3] And more clearly again, in his Epistle to the Romans, where he introduces

[1] 1 Cor. i. 10. [2] Rom. xvi. 17.
[3] Eph. iv. 1.

the metaphor, which he employs so often to express the oneness and the organic unity of Christ's Church: "As in one body," he says, "we have many members, but all the members have not the same office, so we being many are one body in Christ and every one members one of another".[1] He is speaking here undoubtedly, not of any local Church, but of the whole multitude of Christian believers; and he tells us of them that, however many they may be, they can form only one body, and must be knit together, each with the other, in one living whole. He had already declared it more in detail in his first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he says to them: "As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body: so is Christ. For in one spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and in one spirit have we all been made to drink. . . . Now you are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof."[2] And, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, where he exhorts husbands to love their wives, he bases his argument on the relation of Christ towards the Church: "For the husband is the head

[1] Rom. xii. 4. [2] 1 Cor. xii. 12.

of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the Church, being Himself saviour of His body".[1] Or, as he puts it in another passage of the same Epistle: "The God of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . raising Him up from the dead . . . hath subjected all things under His feet, and hath made Him head over all the Church, which is His body, and the fullness of Him, which is filled all in all".[2] The constant teaching of St. Paul, then, is that Christ at the Father's "right hand in the heavenly places"[3] is still head of the visible Church on earth, that the Church is the one mystical body of Christ, that all the members of it are to be united, each with the other, and all with the whole body, as the hand and eye and ear and foot are with each other and with the living body of a man. Could St. Paul express more strikingly the essential oneness and organic unity of the Christian Church?

We have it, therefore, on the Divine authority, made known to us in the words and acts of Christ, and in the testimony of His apostles and disciples, that a Society was established by Him upon earth, and called by Him His Church;

[1] Eph. v. 23. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 17.
[3] *Ibid.*, 20.

that He willed and promised it should neither perish wholly nor undergo essential change, until He Himself comes again to earth in judgment; and that the Divine Society can be only one throughout the world, all the parts being built together into one body, in faith, in ritual, and in government. There exists, consequently, in the world to-day a visible society which is the one true Church of Christ; and all men are bound, opportunity offering, to become members of it.

That membership of Christ's Church must be a blessing, no one, I think, who admits the existence of the Church, will be disposed to deny. To know the doctrines which Christ taught, to share in the graces of a sacramental system which He instituted, to live under the authoritative guidance of religious rulers whom He Himself appointed: these, in themselves, are very excellent privileges, and the source of many other spiritual benefits as well. But are men morally obliged to avail themselves of them? This is a question, as is evident, of vital importance, which must raise very grave issues in human life. To answer it is the purpose of our further consideration to-day.

The characteristic doctrine which distinguishes

the religion of the Gospel from heathenism and Judaism, which at once arrested the attention of both Gentile and Jew, to whom Christ and His Apostles preached, which sobered the thoughtless and changed the hearts of the sinful, which has created in great part the peculiar atmosphere and temper of Christian life and of Christian history, is the immortality of the human soul. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," had been the wisdom of the heathen. "That thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God will give thee," was the main incentive to virtue for the Jews. "To-morrow we die," Christ also and His Apostles taught; but they added: "and after that, the Judgment". Death is only change, a passing over from the occupations and pleasures and sufferings of this visible world to the realities of eternity. And it is to prepare for those realities, to predetermine our part in them, that we are living here. So much God incarnate, by Himself and by His Apostles, has made clearly known to us. Now it cannot seriously be doubted that we are bound to make that preparation, to take all wise and reasonable precautions to secure happiness in eternity. If self-preservation be not merely an instinct of

nature, but a moral law, if man may not misuse grossly or recklessly cast away, the material and spiritual gifts which God has bestowed upon him, and which fit him for personal and social happiness, if he is even bound, within reasonable limits, to preserve and develop them, surely we are obliged to guard against the loss of the higher life which should follow upon death, and against the perversion or destruction of the gifts and faculties, through which alone that higher life is possible? And, surely we are obliged to adopt the means at once easiest and most secure to attain that object? Membership of the Church of Christ is just that means. Unswerving faith in the Christian revelation, obedience to a Divinely given moral law, approach to Divinely instituted religious rites through which grace is offered; submission to a Divinely appointed guiding authority: it is plain that these constitute an easy and effective means by which to attain salvation; and these are the links which bind men to the Christian Church, and bind them, within it, to one another. On this ground, then, of personal need and personal advantage, there would seem to be a natural obligation to seek membership of the Church of Christ.

But, consider, further, the object of Christ's coming, and of His life on earth. He came, as He told the Pharisees, that men "may have life, and may have it more abundantly".[1] He might have redeemed the world by any deliberate act of His human will, above all by His sufferings and by His death. But it was not enough for His mercy and love that man's sin should be blotted out; He desired to provide plentiful means of salvation and sanctification, "until the consummation of the world". And so He spent some thirty years of hidden labour, and then three years of painful public ministry, teaching, gathering adherents, training Apostles, founding and establishing a Church, which should perpetuate His Divine Mission, and be His chosen instrument for its accomplishment until the end of time. And consider, too, the marvellous zeal and continuous efforts of the Apostles, in building up and extending, as their Master had instructed them, the Church of Christ. Think of the journeyings, the toil, the privations, the danger and the sufferings they underwent. "For I think," St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "that God hath sent forth us, the Apostles, last

[1] John x. 10.

of all, as it were men appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake. . . . Even unto this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no fixed abode. . . . We are reviled . . . we are persecuted . . . we are blasphemed . . . we are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all things, even until now."[1] And, "they rejoiced exceedingly that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the Name"[2] and work of Christ. "I rejoice in my sufferings for you," St. Paul writes to the Colossians, "and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church."[3] Now, is it not clear, from considerations such as these, that Christ's Church is the Divinely appointed means for men's salvation? I do not wish to argue, at this moment, that men may not find salvation beyond her pale. I would only invite you to reflect how very admirably the Church has been adapted by her Founder for the realization of His sublime purpose; at what a cost He founded her and built her up; how perseveringly and self-sacrificingly, "in much patience, in

[1] 1 Cor. iv. 9. [2] Acts v. 41. [3] Col. i. 24.

tribulation, in necessities . . . as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,"[1] the Apostles carried forward Christ's Divinely planned work; and then to say if we are not fully justified in our inference that Christ Himself and His Apostles, who knew His mind so intimately, regarded membership of His Church as a supreme and vitally important factor in the Christian life, as the Divinely appointed way by which men are to attain salvation. For Christ and His Apostles did not merely require an unconditional acceptance of His teaching: men were to believe; but they were also to be baptized. And baptism was not a mere isolated rite, however significant and efficacious; it was a solemn initiation into an organized Society. Men were called to follow Christ, not as single, separate individualities, but as subjects of a world-wide spiritual kingdom; and the history of the New Testament is a history of the design and foundation and growth of that kingdom, through which, and in which, men are to be saved. Can we conceive that Christ and His Apostles should be so greatly concerned to establish and perpetuate an institution, and should labour so unweariedly to draw men into it, if they believed it

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 10.

to be a help, indeed, but still a quite unnecessary help towards salvation? Their words, their works, their whole lives are convincing proof of the supreme value which they attached to membership of it.

And consider also the attitude adopted by Christ's Apostles towards those who had been members of the Church, but had gone out from her, through heresy or schism. There were some such in Galatia when St. Paul wrote to the Churches there. "There are some that trouble you," he says, "and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach unto you any gospel other than we have preached to you, let him be anathema."[1] And the author of the letter to Titus, which admittedly represents the mind and temper of St. Paul: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid: knowing that such a one is subverted and sinneth, being self-condemned".[2] And to Timothy: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, that thou war the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience, which some, rejecting, have

[1] Gal. i. 9. [2] Tit. iii. 10.

made shipwreck concerning the faith . . . whom I have delivered up to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme".[1] And even St. John, the Apostle of gentleness and love, is no whit behind St. Paul in his vehement denunciation of such wickedness. "Whosoever revolteth," he writes to the lady elect and her children, "and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. . . . If any man come unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor say to him God speed you. For he that saith to him, God speed you, communicateth with his wicked works."[2] The world has grown very tolerant of religious error; but such tolerance, you see, had no part in the training and temper of the Apostles. For what must we conclude from such stern words as we have quoted, if not that the Apostles and the Apostolic Church esteemed apostacy to be a spiritual death, and the apostate to be cut off, by his own act, not only from the Communion of the Church on earth, but also from the hope of happiness in heaven? And if men may not resign their membership of Christ's Church without imperilling salvation,

[1] 1 Tim. i. 19. [2] 2 John i. 19.

can they, do you think, without danger of a like result, reject that membership when it is offered to them?

But we are not left to draw inferences, however certain. Our Lord was pleased, when establishing His Church, to declare in the most explicit terms that all men are bound, under the very gravest penalty, to enter into it. I shall ask you to consider only two declarations which He made to His Apostles: one, when sending them to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom before His Passion; the other, when laying His last commands upon them, at His ascension into heaven. "Go ye not," He said to them, on the former occasion, "into the way of the Gentiles, nor into the cities of the Samaritans, but go ye rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; and, going, preach, saying the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Then, after explaining to them the object and the methods of their Apostleship, He continued: "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house or that city, shake off the dust of your feet. Amen, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment than for that

city."[1] Here, then, our Lord states plainly that whosoever will not receive His Apostles and "hear" their message of the Kingdom, is deserving of a worse punishment than the people of Sodom and Gomorrha. But to "hear," in the language of the New Testament, is not merely to listen to a message: it means, further, to accept it, to obey: "If he will not hear the Church"; "They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them"; "This is My Beloved Son: hear ye Him". To "hear the words" of the Apostles, then, is to accept and to obey their teaching; to accept and to obey their teaching is to believe and to be baptized, to seek entrance into the spiritual Kingdom, which they were commissioned to announce; and whosoever culpably fails to do so challenges a more intolerable judgment, our Lord solemnly declares, than the sinful Cities of the Plain. Could He express more clearly and more emphatically the obligation which He imposes of entering into His Church? Later, on the occasion which St. Mark describes in the last chapter of His Gospel, where he tells us of Christ's final interview with His Apostles, before He was taken up into Heaven from them,

[1] Luke x. 10.

"Go ye into the whole world," He says to them, "and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."[1] Christ here lays down distinctly the conditions of salvation. Men accept the Gospel message in its integrity; they assent to all the truths which the Apostles are commissioned to proclaim; they are initiated by baptism into the Communion of Christ's adherents, and so into membership of His Church: if so, they "shall be saved". And we might, I think, legitimately infer that it is only on these conditions salvation can be secured. We are not left, however, to draw the inference. Our Lord goes on Himself to state it briefly and emphatically: "He that believeth not shall be condemned". It may be that the text read originally, as the parallelism seems to require, "He that believeth not, or is not baptized"; but, in any case, Christ had before made known the need of baptism in the words, addressed to Nicodemus: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven".[2] Thus we have it once more, on Christ's own authority, that, unless a man believes Christ's

[1] Mark xvi. 15. [2] John iii. 5.

Gospel, and enter, by Baptism, into Christ's Church, he shall certainly be condemned. Or, to set out the same truth in other words, we know, from the unvarying and explicit teaching of Christ and of His Apostles, that men may not, without peril of salvation, refuse to believe Christ's Gospel when it is duly preached to them; may not refuse the means of sanctification He has instituted, when they are offered to them; may not refuse obedience to the spiritual authority He has appointed, when its claims are brought before them. And, since His Church on earth consists of those who believe His Gospel, and are partakers of His Sacraments, and are subject to the pastors He has set over them, it must be clear that membership of His Church is binding upon all who would attain salvation. There is no salvation outside the true Church of Christ.

Under the Gospel scheme, then, there is no place for indifferentism in religion. In the eyes of Christ and of His Apostles, one religion, one Church is not as good as another. It is not sufficient, even were it possible, to lead an honourable and upright life, to be just, truthful and benevolent, and to set aside all Churches and religions whatsoever. If Christ is God, if He

has revealed a religion to mankind, if He has established a spiritual society or Church on earth; if He has commanded all men to become members of it; and if that society still exists on earth to-day: then all men are bound to hearken to the Divine voice, to embrace the religion He has revealed, and enter into the Church which He has founded. To do otherwise, when the truth has been made known to them, is rebellion against God; it is to reject His authority when He teaches, or His authority when He commands.

Now, I do not mean to say that this doctrine is an easy one. Difficulties, and grave ones, are likely to have presented themselves already to the minds of many of us; and opportunity will, I hope, offer at another time to deal with some of them. For the moment, it will be enough, I think, to direct your attention to two considerations. First, that God is and remains always the master of His own gifts; it is for Him to prescribe, as He may choose, the conditions under which He will bestow them. Secondly, that to incur responsibility for rejecting the privileges of the Kingdom, they must have been offered to us. "He who believeth not," follows in our Lord's statement, on

"Go, preach the Gospel to every creature"; and "whosoever shall not receive you or hear your words," supposes the Apostles to have delivered His Divine message. As St. Paul writes to the Romans: "How shall they believe Him of Whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?"[1] No man, we may be sure, shall be punished by God for having left a duty unfulfilled, the very existence of which had never been brought home to him. This, indeed, is far from implying that those who live or die, even inculpably, without the visible Church of Christ, are on a level of advantage with those within. They are exposed to dangers, from which members of the Church are shielded; they are shut out from graces which members of the Church receive abundantly. St. Paul had this in mind when he wrote to the Romans, of the unbelieving Jews: "I speak the truth in Christ; I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost: that I have a great sadness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, who are my kinsmen according

[1] Rom. x. 14.

to the flesh."[1] But we are not now concerned directly with the case of those who are ignorant of the law that binds them to become members of Christ's Church: we have spoken of those only to whom the law has been made known, and who have chosen wilfully to disobey it.

We have seen, then, that the Church of Christ on earth is an imperishable society or kingdom; that it is one, and can be only one, in number and in organic structure; that all men to whom its existence and claims become known are bound to enter into it. We shall next consider its teaching authority.

[1] Rom. ix. 1.

LECTURE V.

TEACHING AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

We have seen that Christ, by Himself and by His Apostles, established a society or Church on earth, which is to endure until the end of time, and is to carry on the work for which "the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us". One among the purposes of the Incarnation was to teach mankind, not to teach them mere human wisdom, which men may gather for themselves, but Divine truth, concerning God and the things of God, which men can learn only from God Himself, and concerning moral conduct, which must look for a standard and a sanction to Divine law. And Christ gave men this teaching, partly adopting and correcting the older dispensation, partly promulgating, Himself and through His Holy Spirit, new doctrines and precepts. And this whole deposit of Divine truth He committed to His Church, to be taught by the Apostles and

by all who should aid or succeed them in their teaching office, and to be accepted and believed by the entire body of His followers, both teachers and taught. Every religion, of whatever kind it is, must rest primarily on a system of beliefs. Christianity is no exception to the rule, and Christianity in the concrete is the living Church of Christ. The Church's first duty must, consequently, be to teach revealed truth: "Going, therefore, teach all nations"; tell men what they must believe concerning God and His attitude towards them, concerning life's present purpose and future destiny, the moral law, Christ's work and personality, the means of grace He instituted, the precepts He imposed, the kingdom He established. Lay before them the Divine message in its entirety, adding nothing, changing nothing, and then guide them into the fulfilment of all things I have commanded.

But will the Church be faithful to her mission? Will she carry out the purpose of her Founder? Will she, above all, continue to hold and to teach unerringly the dogmatic and moral truths which He revealed, and on which Christianity, its faith, its moral life, its embodiment in a visible society, depend? The Church, indeed, will endure for

ever; Christ's solemn promise, God's promise, is our guarantee and pledge. But, will her teachers continue always to deliver their message, as it was entrusted to them? Will the body of believers continue always to believe and to profess what Christ and the Apostles taught? In a word, is Christ's Church infallible in what she teaches concerning the revelation that was made to us through Christ; and is she equally infallible in what she believes to be contained in that revelation? This is the question for which I ask your consideration now; and it is a question, as you will see at once, of no ordinary importance. For, if Christ's Church on earth be infallible in what she holds and teaches as Divinely revealed, and if we can recognize with certainty, among existing religious bodies, the true Church of Christ, then difficulties of belief are very largely at an end, or, at any rate, will find an easy and prompt solution. I may not always be able to determine with certainty even then, what the Church believes and teaches; but, when I do, I am in possession of Divine truth, to which I assent on the authority of God; and no objection, however insoluble it may seem, or however much it may perplex me, can shake my adherence to it.

Now, there was a time, we have already shown, when men had an infallible religious Teacher visible on earth; during the years when God lived among them as Man in Judæa and in Galilee. His contemporaries who were privileged to listen to His teaching and to recognize His Divine authority had the absolute certainty that everything He taught was true. They might fail to discern the full significance of His words; they might be unable to understand the reasons on which He based His teaching; they might note in it an absence of all proof and reasoning whatsoever; and they might be perplexed by objections to which He made no reference, and which they were utterly unable to resolve. But there could be no doubt, no hesitation about assenting to the doctrines which He taught: God the infallible Truth was speaking to them. It may be said no doubt that this was a qualified advantage. To give men an infallible teacher, such as Christ, but no evident infallible means of recognizing Him: to give them teaching which is infallible, but at times obscure; to give them an unerring oracle, but one which leaves many questions unanswered and many difficulties unsolved, is surely to bestow upon

them a privilege with many and grave limitations? I have no wish to deny that the privilege might have been greater: we are of too circumscribed intelligence to judge such high matters with any certainty. I am only concerned at present to point out that it was a privilege, limited, no doubt, as God judged fitting, but none the less real within its limits, and that these limits themselves afford no argument, not even a serious objection, against the bestowal of the privilege in the person of Christ. And when I go on to inquire, as we inquire now, whether or no a like privilege has been bestowed upon Christ's Church, I shall not be prejudiced in my inquiry by the alleged need of an infallible means for discovering her identity, or by her silence and her lack of definiteness in her teaching at times. I shall not expect the infallibility of the Church, if she be infallible, to be very different in its manifestations from the infallibility of Christ Himself.

But has He been pleased to perpetuate the privilege in His Church? If He have, then the members of that Church, who receive her authoritative teaching, can have no more doubt or hesitation about its truth than if Christ spoke to

them Himself. They may be disposed to complain that she is too slow to pronounce, or that she has pronounced too hurriedly; that her language is obscure or not sufficiently decisive; that there are objections which she has passed over, or has not met fully. But, in her clear teaching, in her decisive pronouncements, and within the province assigned to her by her Founder, her children have the truth as guaranteed by God; they are as fully safeguarded against error as were those who listened to the very words of Christ. And Christ's Church, we now proceed to show, is infallible.

By infallibility, we understand, when predicated of the Church, immunity from error in teaching revealed doctrines. We conceive of God as having revealed to mankind a great number of religious and moral truths, some before Christ came, others through Christ Himself, others, again, through the Holy Spirit, as promised by Christ: "But when He, the spirit of truth, is come, He will teach you all truth".[1] This body of truths is often spoken of as the "Deposit of Divine Faith," the collection, that is, of doctrines which are to be believed on the

[1] John xvi. 13.

authority of God, and which have been deposited with the Church to be preserved and promulgated. The Church is infallible, if she neither errs nor can err in teaching and believing that Deposit. I would not be understood to deny, or even doubt, that the Church is infallible even beyond these limits; but that raises a further question, with which we need not concern ourselves to-day. We shall be satisfied for the present if we can prove that she is infallible in teaching and believing those things which are of Divine Faith. And we say "teaching" and "believing"; for infallibility is a twofold gift, as bestowed by Christ upon His Church. We have had occasion to note already that in Christ's Church all the members are bound to hold one and the same faith; and in so far as they cannot err in what they hold, the Church Universal will be, as is said, "passively infallible". But among the multitude of believers there are some set apart to teach, to whom the commission has been handed down which was first given to the Apostles: "Go, therefore, preach the Gospel to every creature"; and, in so far as these teachers cannot err in their delivery of the Divine Message, the Church is said to be "actively

infallible". I do not know that the words have been very aptly chosen; in believing one is as little passive as in teaching; but they have been received into general use; and they may serve, if we are clear as to their meaning. Again, active and passive infallibility are closely co-related. No doubt, in themselves they are wholly distinct and separable. Christ might, had He chosen, have appointed an infallible body of teachers in His Church, and yet have allowed the mass of believers to fall into the grossest religious errors; and He might preserve believers, while exercising no such providence towards their teachers. In fact, however, He has promised His Church that He will bestow infallibility on both: on the teachers, for the sake of those who are to be taught, and because He has ordained that the Gospel authoritatively preached is to be unhesitatingly accepted; and on the taught themselves, because He has constituted His Church a society of believers, which is to endure unchanged until the end of time. And hence there is no need to discuss active and passive infallibility separately; they are linked so closely in Christ's plan that, while the concepts are wholly different, to prove one is

to prove the other. And hence, too, we may fix our attention more particularly on active infallibility, or immunity from error in teaching revealed doctrines, as of more practical moment to ourselves and more subject to inquiry and controversy.

And first, for it is misunderstood very frequently, it will be well to determine its meaning more accurately. It does not presuppose or bring about the personal holiness of those through whom it may be exercised; a great sinner may teach infallibly. It does not involve any new revelation to be granted to the teacher; it is concerned solely with the revelation already made to the Apostles. It does not imply any Divine impulse or inspiration to teach or to define: it only guarantees the truth of the teaching and definition when they actually take place. It does not of itself afford security that it will be called into operation at fitting times and through worthy motives; its one object, its only object, is to give us absolute certainty that what the Church of Christ, through her authorized teachers, declares to be a doctrine revealed of God has really been so revealed. I have no doubt that God's providence for His Church, and His

promises to her, extend far beyond the prerogative we are claiming for her now. I believe that there is a Divine guidance which leads her to teach, to define and to condemn, as the needs of the faithful may require. I think it likely, and the history of the Church encourages me to think, that special gifts are not often exercised by very unworthy men. But infallibility is a singular and specific privilege; and, both in its concept and by the usage of those who claim it for the Church, has no other purpose than to protect her authorized beliefs from doctrinal error. You may have seen a child engaged in writing down from memory a statement or a story received from a father's lips. Suppose the child to exercise a perfect freedom of choice as to the place and time and other circumstances of the writing, and even as to whether it will write at all or no; suppose it, further, to write under the father's watchful supervision; and suppose the father to pledge himself that he will permit nothing to be set down in writing which was not in the story as told originally by himself: should we not have the father's authority for the story, as put before us by the child? Should we not regard the child-writer as sharing to the

full in whatever measure of inerrancy we believed the father to possess? In somewhat the same manner we conceive of the infallibility of Christ's Church: God makes known a revelation to His Church, through Christ and His Apostles; she is to believe and teach that revelation, under God's eye. Suppose Him to guarantee that her teaching and belief shall express, whensoever she teaches and believes, with an absolute truthfulness the revelation originally communicated to her; and we shall have the only right and accepted concept of Church infallibility.

But has infallibility, as thus defined and limited, been bestowed by Christ upon His Church? There is no a priori argument to establish her possession of the gift. God was under no compulsion to make any revelation to mankind; and, when in His mercy He made it, and completed it through Christ and His Holy Spirit, He was not bound to secure, by a further privilege, its permanency and purity. He might have left it to believers to show their appreciation of His gift by their vigilance and solicitude in guarding it. Or He might have taken measures to preserve its more important doctrines, while permitting errors to creep in, in those of lesser

moment. He allows men and societies of men to throw away wholly or in part many of the best gifts which He bestows upon them. Nor does the seeming desirableness of such a privilege afford any conclusive evidence that it has, in fact, been granted. Experience proves that many privileges have been withheld, which seem to us, and perhaps are, of surpassing excellence and value. God is the Master of His gifts: He grants them when and how He pleases.

But, while we hold that there is no convincing a priori proof of the Church's infallibility, we maintain its antecedent likelihood. For, consider how the case stands: God becomes incarnate that He may more effectually teach men Divine truth. "To this end was I born," He says to Pilate, "and for this am I come into the world, that I may bear witness to the truth."[1] He founds an imperishable society, and communicates to it a revelation—a body of truths, by which its faith, its sacraments, its worship, its laws, its whole organization are to be determined. He Himself and His Apostles, men intimately acquainted with His intentions, are unceasing in their efforts to make this revelation known; are emphatic in

[1] John xviii. 37.

declaring that its acceptance is essential to salvation; are insistent that, though an angel from Heaven should preach another Gospel, he must be anathema. They compare it with the older Dispensation, to bring out more clearly its excellence and perfection; and they assert explicitly that it is the full and final measure of supernatural revelation to be bestowed on man. Surely, in all this we have proof that Christ and His Apostles regarded the Christian revelation as a blessing of inestimable value? And surely, too, it is not unreasonable to infer that some special precaution is likely to be adopted, some special assistance to be provided, for its preservation? And the simplest and most obvious means for preserving it would seem to be infallibility in belief and teaching. I do not, of course, advance the argument, as though it could warrant us in asserting positively that the gift has been bestowed; but it will at least prepare us to consider favourably the evidence, which we now proceed to deal with.

The teaching Church, as it was first constituted by Christ Himself, was infallible. The Apostles themselves were certainly of this opinion. "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to

us,"[1] they write to the Churches at Antioch and in Syria and Cilicia, after the Council at Jerusalem. And St. Paul tells the Galatians, in words already quoted: "Though an angel from heaven preach a gospel to you, beside that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema".[2] In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, he commends his teaching on the subject of virginity by the impressive words: "And I think that I also have the spirit of God";[3] and when he contrasts his own preaching with the "persuasive words of human wisdom," he tells them that he had spoken to them "in showing of the spirit and of power;"[4] "not in the learned words of human wisdom, but in the doctrine of the Spirit";[5] for, as he adds: "We have the mind of Christ".[6] Hence the Apostles demanded an absolute acceptance of their teaching, as though it were God Himself who taught. Hence St. Paul thanks God for the Thessalonians, "because that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God, you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is, indeed) the word of God".[7] And

[1] Acts xv. 28. [2] Gal. i. 8. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 40.
[4] *Ibid.*, ii. 4. [5] *Ibid.*, 13. [6] *Ibid.*, 16.
[7] 1 Thess. ii. 13.

hence the Apostles condemned so earnestly, almost fiercely, apostates who rejected any portion of the Gospel which they had once accepted. Surely language such as this, a mode of acting such as this, implies that the doctrines which they preached had been revealed by God, and that they themselves were Divinely guided in making the revelation known?

But the view, it may be said, which the Apostles took of the assistance given them for the fulfilment of their mission need not necessarily be correct. There have been persons who believed themselves under a heavenly guidance, when carrying out purposes in which God had no part. We have to bear in mind, however, that the Apostles were Christ's intimate friends, prepared by Him during three continuous years and instructed for their work, "to whom also He showed Himself alive after His Passion . . . for forty days appearing to them, and speaking to them of the Kingdom of God".[1] They must, therefore, have been in full possession of His mind, and of His intentions for His Church, and not at all likely to be mistaken as to the most valuable of the gifts which He had determined to

[1] Acts i. 3.

bestow on her. We can turn, besides, to Our Lord's own declarations, which He made to the Apostles when conferring the office of teachers upon them; and we may consider two, recorded by the Evangelists in their accounts of His last discourse, when He was about to ascend into heaven from them. "All power is given to Me," He says in the Gospel of St. Matthew, "in heaven and on earth. Going, therefore, teach ye all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold I am with you."[1] It is evident that He is here sending them forth to preach to all men the full revelation made by God; and He solemnly promises to be "with" them in the work. Now, I shall ask you to examine carefully and in some detail the meaning and force of this expression, "I (God) am with you," and then its bearing on the mission entrusted to the Apostles. Clearly we must take it to mean what it ordinarily meant, at that day, in the language and country of the speaker, what the Apostles were accustomed to understand by it, and what they must, therefore, have taken it to mean, when Christ addressed it to them. Under such solemn circumstances, and

[1] Matt. xxviii. 20.

in confiding such high duties to them, He would not use language which they could not rightly understand. The phrase occurs repeatedly in both the Old and the New Testaments; and it retains everywhere one fixed and well-defined meaning. It implies always, on the part of God, a particular providence, a special watchful care, of persons and their interests, so that they shall unfailingly succeed in the undertakings to which it refers. Thus we read in Genesis that it was said to Abraham: "God is with thee in all that thou dost".[1] And, again, God Himself says to Isaac: "Dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of . . . and I will be with thee, and will bless thee".[2] And a little later: "Fear not, I am with thee".[3] Of the Patriarch Joseph we are told: "And the Lord was with Joseph; and he was a prosperous man in all things. And his master saw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand."[4] So, too, speaking by Isaias, God comforts Israel: "Fear not, for thou art Mine. When thou shalt pass through the waters I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not cover thee. When thou shalt

[1] Gen. XXI. 22. [2] *Ibid.*, XXVI. 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, 26. [4] *Ibid.*, XXXIX. 3.

walk in the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee . . . Fear not, for I am with thee."[1] In the New Testament, Gabriel salutes God's chosen mother with the same assurance of a special Divine protection: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!"[2] And, when "Nicodemus came to Jesus . . . he said to Him: Master, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which Thou dost, unless God be with him".[3] St. Peter, too, when sent to Cornelius and his kinsmen in Cesarea, takes for granted that even the Gentiles are familiar with the expression, and its significance, "Jesus of Nazareth": he says to them, "how God anointed Him with the Holy Ghost and with power; Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him".[4] Indeed the phrase occurs close upon one hundred times in the writings of the Old and New Testaments, in contexts exactly similar to that in which Christ addresses it to the Apostles; and it invariably bears the meaning we have assigned to it, of a particular Divine assistance resulting in success.

[1] Is. XLIII. 2. [2] Luke I. 48.
[3] John III. 2. [4] Acts X. 38.

And, furthermore, we find that when God, in Holy Scripture, makes choice of anyone for a work of peculiar difficulty, which seems to be beyond the natural strength of the agent He has selected, He is accustomed to inspire confidence, and to guarantee success by this same expression. "Who am I that I should go to Pharao, and should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" Moses protested, when God appointed him their deliverer. And God said to him, "I will be with thee".[1] Again, when He destined Jeremias to the cities of Juda, and the reluctant prophet objected to the Divine call: "Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child," God's answer was: "Thou, therefore, gird up thy loins and arise and speak to them all that I command thee . . . for behold I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee".[2] And, when Gideon mistrusted his ability to "deliver Israel out of the hand of Madian": "Behold, my family is the meanest in Manasses, and I am the least of my father's house," the Lord said to him, "I will be with thee; and thou shalt cut off Madian as one man".[3] And,

[1] Exod. III. 3. [2] Jer. I. 6, 17, 19.
[3] Jud. VI. 15.

once again, in the New Testament, in the midst of St. Paul's dangers from the Jews of Corinth, the Lord said to him: "Do not fear, but speak, and hold not thy peace; because I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee".[1]

But there is no need to accumulate further evidence. Nothing can be more certain than the invariable meaning in Scripture language, the language most familiar to Our Lord and His Apostles, of the phrase, "I, God, am with thee". It signifies always a very special and efficacious Divine assistance; and, more particularly, when a commission is given, which appears to be beyond human strength, it carries with it a Divine promise of complete success. Does not something of the idea attach to the phrase we ourselves so often use when a friend sets out on any arduous undertaking: "God be with you"?

Now, what was the undertaking, what the commission, which Christ entrusted to His Apostles, and to which He subjoined the promise: "I am with you all days"? The Gospels answer: "Go, teach all nations," "Go, preach the Gospel to every creature," "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded

[1] Acts xviii. 9.

you". Here, surely, is a commission of more than ordinary difficulty—to teach all men all things whatsoever Christ had taught the Apostles. They, the rude illiterate fishermen, "foolish and slow of heart to believe," are to publish to the world the whole revelation which He had made known to them; not adding to it, not taking from it, not changing in any wise the Divine message. And so He promises to be "with them"—to watch over, and to assist them, to secure the complete success of the teaching mission He has imposed upon them. Can He do so, if He permits them to fall into error, in the "teaching of the nations," in the "preaching of the Gospel to every creature"? Must He not see to it that they teach and preach what they have heard and learned from Him?

And consider also, in the account St. Mark gives of the same momentous incident, what he tells us of the sanction under which Christ sent His Apostles to "preach the Gospel": "He that believeth not," Christ says to them, "shall be condemned". He binds all men, under the most terrible of penalties, to accept the Divine message in its entirety when presented to them. They may, indeed, nay, ought to, verify the credentials

of His messengers; but they may not examine critically the message itself. They may not give a qualified or limited assent. They may not accept a part and reject the rest. They may not refuse any the least portion of the Divine gift. And can we conceive a wise and merciful Redeemer imposing such a stringent obligation, and under such a fearful penalty, if any part of the message, as delivered, be untrue? When He binds men, under pain of everlasting misery, to accept His revelation, as it is announced to them by His messengers, does He not bind Himself to have it announced as He had made it known? Or, does He command men solemnly to believe falsehood as well as truth, and under the same penalty? And how can He exclude all falsehood from the teaching of the Apostles unless He confers infallibility upon them?

The Apostles, therefore, that is, the teaching Church, at the time of its foundation, received the gift of infallibility, for their work of teaching the revelation made through Christ. And, as we have seen from their language and from their ways of acting, they themselves understood clearly that the gift had been bestowed upon them. Now, is it likely, is it even credible, that

the first teachers of the Church should receive the gift, if it was to perish with them? Christ draws the Apostles to Him, keeps them with Him for three years, during which He instructs and trains them, sends down His Holy Spirit upon them, "as it were in parted tongues of fire," and further safeguards the revelation which He commissions them to announce by making them infallible. The Apostles pass away; their place is filled by other teachers not formed personally by Christ; the Christian revelation must be announced until the consummation of the world; the penalty for non-acceptance of it remains unaltered; the danger of error and adulteration grows as one generation succeeds another: can we, then, believe that Christ withdraws the safeguard which He gave in the beginning, just when the need for it becomes more pressing? Every probability points the other way. It was no purely personal privilege conferred on the Apostles. It was no mere reward of personal merit. It was granted to them, for the advantage of those whom they were to teach. It was attached to the teaching office, which they were to fill. As long, therefore, we may conclude, as the teaching office continues in the Church, as long as men are bound to accept

the Church's teaching, so long will that teaching remain infallible.

But further, as we have already seen, the Church which Christ established is to endure for ever. Not only is there to be a visible Society, which shall bear Christ's name; but it is to continue one and the same in specific character and constitution, from the time when He laid its foundation until it is perfected by His second coming. Its object, its form of government, its sacramental system cannot change. It cannot become other than what He planned and fashioned. Now, the teaching authority of the Church is of its very essence, as Christ established it, like the revelation He commissioned it to preserve and preach. If the teaching authority which was once infallible should become liable to error; if the doctrines "once delivered to the saints" should become corrupted in transmission; if the Church's faith to-day should be different from that of yesterday or of the day before; with what semblance of truth could it be said that the Church of Christ, the same Church founded by Him and built up by His Apostles, is with us still, and will remain with us for ever? And how can identity of teaching and of consequent belief be

secured, generation after generation, unless He makes His Church infallible? The argument, therefore, appears to be conclusive that, as the Apostles were, so their successors will be, beyond the reach of error in their teaching office until Christ comes again.

And we are confirmed in our certainty by the direct and explicit promise of Christ. Let us take up once more the words in which He pledged Himself to guard the Apostles against all doctrinal error in their preaching of the Gospel: "Going, therefore, preach . . . and behold, I am with you—with you, all days, even to the consummation of the world". By the words, "I am with you," He promises them, as we have seen, infallibility. By the words, "even to the consummation of the world," He extends the promise to the very end of time. The "you" in "I am with you" does not restrict the gift to the Apostles only. It was very usual with Christ to address Himself to those before Him, as representatives of others like them in all future generations. The Sermon on the Mount is rich in examples: "Blessed are ye that hunger now"; "Wo to you that are rich"; "Be ye, therefore, merciful"; "Bless them that curse you," and many

others.[1] "Thus, therefore, shall you pray,"[2] He says, when suggesting a form to be used by all men, throughout all time. "You shall hear of wars and rumours of wars,"[3] He tells the Apostles, when pointing out to them the signs of His second coming. Again, in the sixth chapter of St. John, He warns the multitude: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you".[4] And we might multiply texts almost indefinitely which while addressed to Christ's immediate hearers, are obviously meant, like those just quoted, for all His followers to whose knowledge they may come. Is it not, indeed, quite customary, in our own daily life, to speak of those who have long since died, and of those still unborn, in words that, taken literally, point only to ourselves? We have no fear that any will misunderstand us, when we say that "We Irish Catholics have struggled and borne persecution, through centuries, to preserve our faith"; or when we add: "And we shall continue to struggle, through other centuries, if necessary, to secure and to maintain our religious rights".

[1] Luke VI. 21-36. [2] Matt. VI. 9.
[3] *Ibid.*, XXIV. 6. [4] John VI. 54.

Such modes of thought and speech are not confined to any people or to any tongue. And so, in our text, "I am with you," the words spoken primarily to the Apostles, and declaring their inerrancy, are applicable also to their successors in the teaching office; and the added clause: "Until the consummation of the world," shows evidently that they must be so applied; for the Apostles are not themselves to preach, "until the consummation of the world". If Christ be "with them" until then, it must be in the persons of those to whom they hand on their commission and their authority.

Finally, the same Divine promise is given to the Church in Christ's words to St. Peter at Cesarea Philippi, from which we have already drawn a proof that she cannot perish. "Thou art Peter," He says, "and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against her."[1] He gives warning of the trials and dangers in store for her; He implies that her whole history is to be one of struggle and combat; and He adds the assurance, absolute and unqualified, that she shall not be worsted in the strife: no enemies "shall prevail against her".

[1] Matt. xvi. 18.

Now, the full significance of this assurance, as it bears upon the question with which we are engaged, is only to be understood when we reflect on the objects for which the Church was founded. Chief amongst them was the spread and preservation of the doctrines which Christ taught. Indeed, this purpose underlies all others, for our conception of the Church and our acceptance of her claims rest wholly on what Christ has revealed to us concerning her. Her most important office, her fundamental duty, is, therefore, to announce and safeguard the revelation made by Christ. She fails in her mission if she neglects to make that revelation known; and she fails no less if she corrupts the Divine message, or allows it to become corrupted in her keeping. How could her enemies more entirely "prevail against her" than by effecting an admixture of falsehood with revealed truth in the Church's common faith, or by leading her to preach man's mere inventions as the revealed Gospel of Christ? She must not, under pain of failure, of ceasing to be the society of believers which Christ established, hold any doctrine as revealed which God has not revealed to her. She must not deny any doctrine which He has revealed. She may not contradict

to-day what at any time she has ever taught. She can no more alter her creed than she can alter her Sacramental system or her form of government. And, if she is to preserve it unaltered, she must be safeguarded against error in belief and teaching, she must be protected by passive and active infallibility.

We have thus, I think, found abundant warrant in the Gospels for the statement we set out to demonstrate: that Christ's Church on earth has received from Him this high privilege. We should have judged it antecedently likely that He would bestow the gift upon her. In His recorded conversations with the Apostles He pledges Himself repeatedly and very solemnly to do so. The Apostles themselves, the official teachers whom He has appointed and trained, show plainly, by their words and acts, that they are certain the pledge has been fulfilled. And the whole history of the infant Church—the unconditional assent which she demands for all her teaching, the decision and finality with which she condemns opposing errors, the penalties she threatens and inflicts on heresy—all conspire to prove Christ's Church infallible.

There remain certain consequential questions

which present themselves here for solution. Some of them we can deal with briefly but sufficiently at once; others will come up for treatment more appropriately at a further stage of our inquiries.

First, then, Who is the "Subject" of infallibility? Who are the persons upon whom the gift is bestowed? Infallibility of belief, or passive infallibility, we have already seen, vests in the whole body of believers, in all the members of the Church; infallibility of teaching, or active infallibility, in the whole body of the Church's teachers. Who these teachers are and whether any one or other of them can be singled out as possessed of special privileges, we need not now determine. Nor is it necessary to define with any great accuracy what measure of agreement in believing or in teaching is required as evidence that the gift is operating. Two things seem certain: one, that absolute unanimity neither is, nor can be, essential; the other, that agreement must have reached such a point that the majority can be accounted morally the body. When we know that the faithful, as a body, though there may be exceptions, hold a doctrine to be revealed of God, we know, too, that it is so

revealed; and when we know that the official teachers of the Church, as a body, though there may be exceptions, teach a doctrine as revealed of God, we know, too, that that doctrine is revealed.

Secondly, What is the "Object" of infallibility? What are the doctrines, in teaching and believing which, the Church is under this Divine protection? The whole Christian revelation, every truth revealed by God to man, and commended by Christ to the Apostles, when He bade them "go preach the Gospel to every creature". Other connected truths may also be included; whether it is so or not, we shall probably have occasion to inquire later; but, at present, it is enough to show, as we have shown, that the whole "Deposit of Faith," the whole body of doctrines entrusted by Christ to the keeping of His Church, is covered by her infallibility.

Thirdly, How are we to determine the content of that revelation? How are we to know the limits of that doctrinal territory within which the Church can exercise her infallible authority? As in the case of all authority, so here, many questions will lie clearly within her jurisdiction, many others will as clearly lie outside. In those

which seem doubtful, it will be for the Church herself to decide. A lower tribunal may determine the sphere of its own authority in doubtful cases, though subject to appeal; the highest tribunal must determine it, since there is no other tribunal to which appeal can be made.

Fourthly, How shall we tell when the Church is exercising her Divine gift? How may we know she is teaching or holds a truth infallibly? When in any way it is made clear to us that she is using the fullness of her teaching authority. She may tolerate opinions in matters of religion, may approve of them as edifying or pious, may hold or recommend them as more probable, as true, or even as certain: and yet there may be no question of her infallibility, nor of the Divinely revealed Deposit. But, if the whole Church should accept a doctrine as revealed, or should solemnly propose it as a doctrine of Divine faith through the teaching of Pope or General Council or the dispersed episcopate: then we know for certain that belief and teaching are infallible.

Fifthly, What is our obligation to assent, when the Church so believes or teaches? The same obligation as though it were God Himself Who spoke to us immediately. Indeed, our assent is

given in such cases not to the Church but to God. I believe the revealed truth, because it is God Who has revealed it; and I am certain that God has revealed it because His Church, Divinely safeguarded, tells me infallibly that He has done so.

Other questions bearing upon infallibility we may defer till later.

Let me sum up, then, very briefly what we have thus far discussed and decided. We have seen that in the New Testament writings we have trustworthy records of the life and doctrines of Christ. From these records we have learned, with entire certainty, that Christ claimed to be, and was, God Himself. From them, too, we know, beyond all reasonable doubt, that Christ, the Man God, established a visible Society, which He called His Church; which is to endure on earth, essentially unchanged, until the end of time; which is and can be only one—one in religious faith, worship, government; which is Divinely protected against all error in teaching and believing the revelation entrusted to her; and which all men are bound, under the gravest penalties, to enter, when her claims have been made known to them.

That visible society or Church is still on earth, the same to-day in all essentials as Christ planned and founded her. And we are in a position now to identify her. In our next Lecture we shall proceed to do so.

LECTURE VI.

WHICH IS THE TRUE CHURCH OF CHRIST?

In the previous Lectures, we established the value of the New Testament writings as historical records, and we proved from them the Divinity of Christ and the foundation by Him of a world-wide visible society which He called His Church. This Church, we saw, is imperishable. It is the depositary of Christ's teaching and sacraments; and Christ Himself commands all men to become members of it. It is, and can be, only one, one among the many rival religious societies, of which each claims to be the Church of Christ, or to be at least a branch or portion of it. It is, therefore, all-important for us to determine which it is. That is the question I purpose discussing with you now; and I hope to show that the Catholic Church in communion with the See of Rome, and that

Church alone, is the Church which Christ established.

We may begin by narrowing the field of our inquiry. All non-Christian bodies may be excluded from consideration, for it is clear that the Church of Christ is not to be found among those who reject His personal claims, His distinctive teachings, and ignore or repudiate the very existence of any society which looks to Him as its founder.

Nor is there any need to examine in detail the position of such other religious associations as call themselves, indeed, by the Christian name, and accept some Christian doctrines, while they deny others that lie at the very foundation of the Christian faith and Christian organization. There are those who profess a reverence for Christ and for the laws of moral conduct which He taught, and yet believe Him to be only man, or at least think it allowable to question His Divinity. Now, as we have already seen, if there be one doctrine more than another which Our Lord Himself taught clearly and insistently; if there be any one which His Apostles preached as of supreme importance; if there be one on which, as on a foundation stone,

the Church of Christ was established, surely it is the doctrine that Christ is God. And what part with the Church of Christ can a body have which rejects or doubts her central dogma, and, with that dogma, her Sacraments, her worship, and her authority?

We proceed, then, to consider the religious bodies which profess belief in the Divinity of Christ, which accept what they believe to be His teachings, and are organized into societies which correspond, they think, with the kingdom that He established. Unfortunately, there are many such bodies. There is the Anglican Episcopal Communion, there is the Greek Church, or rather there are the various sections—Russian, Bulgarian, Servian, Hellenic, Turkish—into which the Greek Church has divided. There are the Lutherans in Northern Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. There are the Presbyterians in Switzerland, Scotland, Ulster, and North America. There are the different "Connexions" into which Methodism has broken up; and there are some hundreds of other less numerous and less well-known associations: all bearing the Christian name and reverencing the Bible. Finally, there is the Church of which

we ourselves are members. Obviously, in face of such divisions, three questions present themselves. Can the aggregate of all these bodies, the whole multitude of men and women, who call themselves after the name of Christ, confess His Divinity, and accept portions of His teaching, can they, all together, make up that one Church which He established? And, if not, can any smaller group, the Episcopal, for instance—Anglican, Greek, and Roman—which claim to possess Sacramental Orders, transmitted lawfully from Apostolic times? Or, is there only one among all these conflicting bodies, which is marked with the characteristics of Christ's true Church; and is that one our own, the Church in communion with the Bishop and See of Rome?

With the first question we can, I think, deal very briefly: it is quite impossible to conceive of the Church of Christ as composed of all the various societies that take His name. They make no pretence, they have no wish, to form one organization. They have no common creed, no common worship, no common system of laws, no common authority. Many of them are engaged in a bitter and ceaseless endeavour to destroy one another. If Christ's Kingdom upon

earth be one, in any intelligible sense of the word, it cannot be constituted by such warring elements. Besides, every argument we shall advance against the Anglican theory of a three-branched Church —of one Church composed of Anglican, Greek, and Roman provinces or branches—must tell with intensified force against a Church composed of them and of all the other Christian bodies.

What, then, is this branch theory, which has found so much acceptance among members of the Anglican communion, especially since the days of the Oxford Movement? We are asked to conceive of the Church of Christ as a great tree, whose branches fill the earth. The tree is one, the branches are distinct; but all draw life from the same source, which gives a corporate unity to the whole. And we are asked further to believe that there are only three branches in the Church; because Episcopal and Priestly Orders validly transmitted are of the very essence of the Church of Christ; and it is only in the Anglican, Greek, and Roman Churches that such Orders can be found. Lutherans, Dutch Calvinists, Scotch Presbyterians, all the Nonconformist sects, are, in this Anglican theory, without the Christian Church. They neither have, nor claim

to have, Bishops and Priests with Divinely appointed powers, handed on by generation to generation, from Apostolic times, through Divinely appointed Sacramental rites. Anglicans alone, they say, with Greeks and Roman Catholics, have, and claim to have, a Sacrament of Orders, which only Bishops can confer; and therefore, Anglicans, Greeks, and Roman Catholics alone belong to and constitute the Church of Christ.

Now, on this theory we may remark at the outset, and it is a weighty argument against its truth, that it is wholly modern, entirely unthought of through all the earliest ages of Church history. Neither those who separated from the primitive Church in local schisms, nor those who took part in the sad division of East and West, and in the Reformation troubles of the sixteenth century, had recourse to it; and we can hardly doubt it would have been at least discussed, had anyone imagined it was tenable.

Further, even in our own day, though it has been prominently before the world for three-quarters of a century, it finds no one to accept and advocate it, outside the Anglican Communion. A section, a small minority, most pro-

bably, of the Church of England, maintains the theory; the large majority of Protestant Episcopalians know nothing of it; while Greeks and Roman Catholics repudiate it utterly. Is it likely that the Church of Christ is constituted on a pattern which not one in a hundred of her members will acknowledge?

Are we to believe that the true constitution of the Christian Church was hidden from mankind, from the Church herself, throughout nineteen centuries, and was only then made known to a little group of Anglican theologians who have failed to persuade any but a handful of their own Communion that their conception of the Church is that of Christ?

Nor is the theory merely novel, and incredible to those for whom it was intended: in itself it is quite untenable. We can, indeed, conceive of local Churches largely independent of each other, yet forming one ecclesiastical society, through unity of faith, of communion, and of supreme government. Such were the Churches of Gaul, of Spain, of Africa, and others in the early centuries. Such are the Catholic Churches of France, of Ireland, of Germany, of the United States, and many others, in our own day. But, where in-

dependence changes into hostility, where intercommunion is denied, where there is no common social authority which all are prepared to recognize, what social unity can there be? How can distinct and warring bodies be said to form one society? When the States of the American Union seceded from the Mother Country, when they repudiated her authority, set up an independent Government of their own, and proceeded to make war against her, did they not cease to form one kingdom with her, even though they still retained her language, her laws, and her traditions? Could they, can they now, with any propriety of thought or of expression, be said to form a branch or province of the Empire? And if another of the colonies should break away or be cast off, though it did nothing else than cease to obey the authority it had obeyed before, would it not cease to be a portion of the King's dominions? Now, God's Church is not less one than any civil state. We have seen, from the terms of its institution, and from the teaching and action of the Apostles, that all its members must be linked together in unity of faith, of Sacraments, of communion, and, above all, of government. It is not, as we saw, a loose federation of more

or less independent states. It is one organized society, one "Kingdom," one "Household," one living "Body," whose members act and re-act upon each other, and are joined and controlled in living unity by one principle of life, which is a common and supreme authority. But, what unity can we discover in this aggregate of "branches" or "provinces"? They have no one visible government which all are prepared to obey. They have no one profession of Faith, which all will accept as sufficient and essential. They have no common religious rites and Sacraments which all may partake of, and to which all are to be admitted. Each charges the others with heresy and with schism. Each counts it a duty and a gain to make proselytes from the others. And this condition of things has lasted, between Greeks and Roman Catholics, for eight and a half centuries; between English Protestants on the one hand, and both Greece and Rome upon the other, for close upon four hundred years. I am not seeking now to apportion blame for this disunion, to determine its origin, or to fix the charge of heresy or schism on any of the contending bodies. I only ask you to observe that there is disunion, disunion bitter, long con-

tinued, on fundamental points in the very constitution and teaching of the Church; and then to say is it not a mockery to maintain, as Anglicans maintain, that these three antagonistic bodies form one social organization, the one Church of Christ?

Or conceive if you can the branch theory set out for the acceptance of St. Paul, of the St. Paul on whose emphatic language to the Ephesians and the Corinthians, on the subject of Church unity, we have already dwelt. Tell him that the Church which he and the Apostles founded has become divided into rival parties; that the three chief of these are wholly at variance in their symbols of belief; that they refuse to communicate in the same Sacraments, or join in the same religious worship; that they are ruled by pastors who are openly and earnestly hostile to each other; but that the Church is still essentially unchanged, is still one and the same with that Apostolic Church which he laboured to establish, and which had only one Faith, one worship, one and the same Sacraments, one supreme governing authority. Would not St. Paul reply that it was not so he had conceived of the Church's constitution; that it was not so their Master had

explained it to the Apostles; that the unity which Christ had promised, and they had striven to realize, was not a curious abstraction, the object, for centuries, of prayer and longing, but a concrete fact, an essential attribute, in every period of the Church's history?

The Church of Christ, then, is not to be found in an impossible combination of these three conflicting societies. No visible kingdom was ever constituted of provinces which acknowledged no visible and common ruler, which permitted no civil and social intercourse between their citizens, which made unceasing and active war upon each other.

And yet the Church of Christ must be identical with one of these three bodies. They, and they alone, among all others, have preserved even the outward forms of that essential organization, which Christ and His Apostles gave to the Apostolic Church. In no other bodies do we meet with even a claim to Divinely appointed teachers, to doctrinal infallibility, to unity of Faith, to an ordered transmission of priestly powers, to any Sacramental system, to a world-wide mission, to one common ruling authority. Indeed, the only oneness those others can make show of is that of

name, and of a few so-called fundamental doctrines. What else have the Calvinists of Geneva in common with those of Scotland? Or the Methodists of the United States with those of Wales? The Church of Christ, then, is identical with that of Greece, or that of England, or that of Rome: where we use the names to designate not geographical areas, but religious bodies. To these three we may confine our further inquiry.

And here we are compelled, however unwillingly, to touch on controversy. I have endeavoured hitherto to avoid everything which could cause pain or give offence to others. I have desired only to explain and justify our own position. Religious controversy, like every other, leads few souls into the truth. But we must enter, in some degree, upon it here. For we have to show that the Roman Catholic Church, alone among rival claimants, is the one true Church of Christ. This we cannot do, unless by rejecting the claims of others, especially the Greek and Anglican Communions. We must only strive to do it temperately and in charity.

And first, as to the Greek or, as it is frequently called, the "Orthodox Greek" Communion. We are to note that it is by no means limited to the

Christian population of either ancient or modern Greece. It includes all the Episcopal Churches in the East, which were once united with the See of Rome, but which parted from her, first for a time, under Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, in the ninth century, and then permanently, under Michael Cærularius, about 1054. It counts large numbers of adherents in the Turkish Empire; it is spread throughout the whole of Russia; it is the religion of the Kingdoms of Greece, Servia, Montenegro, Roumania, and Bulgaria. Its total membership must be about one hundred millions. And it has preserved a great portion of the Catholic inheritance; almost all the dogmas of the Faith, valid Episcopal Succession, Priestly Orders, the Sacrament and Sacrifice of the Eucharist, private Confession and absolution of sins, all seven Sacraments, devotion to the Blessed Mother of God and to the other saints, a belief in Purgatory and in prayer for the departed. But it is not the Church of Christ. Indeed it is not a Church at all. For Christ's Church, as we have seen, is an organized Society, the parts of which are united by a common bond, which can only be authority. Now, in the Churches of the Greek Communion there is no common authority. In

Greece itself they are governed by an Episcopal Synod appointed by the King. In Russia by the Holy Synod, which is wholly dependent on the Emperor. In the Balkan States by National Synods, each within its own territory. In Turkey by the four Patriarchs—Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. And each Synod and Patriarch is wholly independent of every other; no claim is admitted, no claim is made, that any should have a right of interference within another's jurisdiction. It is true, no doubt, that there is a certain unity of belief among these Churches; points of difference are few and unimportant. But the fact seems due to the conservatism or intellectual inactivity of the Eastern mind; for there is no principle of unity among them: and as there is no one governing, so there is no one teaching, authority. Each national Church in its national Synod may formulate its creed as it judges best. No power is recognized on earth as competent to declare officially what the Faith of the Greek Church is. Such an aggregation of independent bodies is clearly not the Church of Christ. It corresponds in no way with the "Kingdom," "Household," "City," "Sheepfold," of which Our Lord spoke,

or with the living human "body," which was the chosen metaphor of St. Paul. Nor does the Greek Church claim to be the one true Church. It makes no such claim, and has never made it, for any of the national establishments, into which it has broken up. And, whatever may have been its case, when all the Eastern Bishoprics were grouped about the Patriarchate of Constantinople, and acknowledged a primacy of honour in that See, now at any rate, that the primacy has been set aside, and that the national Churches are as independent of each other as are the civil States, the claim is not put forward even for the aggregate of the Eastern Churches. We have it, therefore, that these Churches make no exclusive claim to be the Church of Christ; that they are without the living unifying principle which Christ instituted in His Kingdom to make it and to keep it one; that they are in fact not one, but separate and independent bodies. We may, I think, in consequence, conclude unhesitatingly that the Orthodox or Eastern Church is not Christ's Church.

And what of the Anglican Communion? By the Anglican Communion I mean the whole body of Protestant Episcopalians, represented by the

Bishops of English-speaking countries, who assemble from time to time in Lambeth for Pan-Anglican Synods. Their dioceses lie in England, Scotland, Ireland, in the various Colonies of the British Empire, and in the United States of America; with a very few others, such as Jerusalem, Southern Europe, and Korea. It is not of course contended that the Anglican Church in any of these countries is the one true Church of Christ; no one has ever put forward such a theory. A merely local Church—whether of a city, a province, or an empire—cannot be Christ's universal Church. But it may be argued that Protestant Episcopalians in their entirety do constitute that Church: for they are to be met with everywhere; and in number they are many millions. Let us examine if it be so.

And, first, if we consider them as an aggregate of all the local Churches, they are in the same position as the Greeks; they may be one in name, in methods, and in objects; but they have no organic unity. They are distinct and independent bodies. There is no common authority which can legislate for all; no common authority which can everywhere declare what are revealed doctrines. The Bishops of the Anglican Com-

munion can indeed meet together in Lambeth or in Canterbury; and the Anglican Archbishop, who holds the Cathedral of Anselm and Thomas Becket, will probably be invited to preside over them. But no one has a right to convene them: they meet because they themselves choose to meet, as might the members of a Section on Religion in the British Association; and the outcome of their conferences and discussions is entirely without authority. They cannot decide a doctrinal controversy. They cannot determine a point of liturgy. They cannot enact or abrogate a single detail of Church discipline. They know, they have been warned, and they profess, that even a Pan-Anglican Synod can only discuss and offer counsel; it can neither teach nor command authoritatively. There is no living principle of unity in the Anglican, as there is none in the Greek, Communion. And the consequences are more disastrous among the Anglicans than among the Easterns. There is in fact no unity of faith among them: a loyal Anglican may hold whichever he may choose of contradictory opinions upon the most vital points of Church doctrine. Ask him, for instance, if Christ be really present in the Eucharist: he will tell you, on the authority

of a late Primate of the Church of England, that you may affirm and that you may deny it. Ask him has the priesthood of his Church the power of offering sacrifice, and the power of forgiving sin: he will answer that the most learned and the most devoted members of his Church are divided on both questions. Ask him, again, is Episcopacy of Divine institution, and are priestly powers transmitted by Sacramental rites: he must reply that high Anglican authorities may be quoted on both sides of the controversy. Is marriage a Christian Sacrament, or is it merely a civil contract, subject, like other contracts, to State control, and terminable by mutual consent or legal sentence? He will admit that some maintain its sacred character; but others, the majority, indeed, and not a few among the pastors of his Church, maintain the contrary. May a minister of his communion deny the efficacy and need of Baptism, and still continue to exercise the ministry? He must say that so it has been legally decided. Baptism, the Eucharist, Penance, Marriage, the Sacrifice of the Mass, the historicity and inspiration of the Scriptures, the Resurrection of Christ our Lord, His very Divinity—and we might add almost indefinitely to the list

—are all doctrines on which an approved and acknowledged member of the Church of England may believe almost anything he chooses. And he is free to do so, because he has no authoritative teacher, to whom all must listen. No doubt, there are the Holy Scriptures, the early Councils and tradition, which many Anglicans hold in unquestioning reverence. But where is the living authoritative interpreter? Who is to apply the dead rule to present issues? As matters stand, it must be each man's private judgment. Synods and Convocations, whether of York or Canterbury, of Ireland, or the United States, or even of all the Anglican Churches, make no claim to an infallible authority. Formularies are dead things; and there is no living judge of controversies. No wonder that the very foundations of the Faith are so uncertain, that there is such diversity of belief, and such vital and never-ending differences. And no wonder we fail to find in such a Church that Kingdom of Christ on earth, which He promised should be ever one in faith, in worship, and in government.

But, indeed, the Protestant Episcopalian Church and the members of the Anglican Communion, make no claim to constitute, by themselves alone,

that Kingdom; they profess—or those of them who hold that Christ's Church is visibly to endure for ever—that they themselves are only part, a "province" or a "branch," of the great world-wide organization. And, how unfounded, how impossible, that theory is, we have seen already.

Neither Easterns, then, nor Anglicans have any title to be thought the Church of Christ. In both Communions there are high graces and lofty virtues, and noble Christian characters; there are precious truths of revelation, and a rich outpouring of Divine blessings. But the special mark and seal of the Christian Church, the oneness of Faith, government, and means of sanctification, which Christ made essential—that is possessed by neither of them in fact or principle.

And here we might almost end our inquiry. For, if the Protestant Episcopalian Churches do not constitute the true Church of Christ; if it be not formed of the Greek or Eastern Churches; and if the branch theory advanced by Anglicans be unfounded and erroneous; then we may infer at once, and with the utmost certainty, that the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church, the Church of which we ourselves are members. We have seen, and we have proved, that the

visible Church of Christ is an imperishable society. Therefore, it exists somewhere in the world of to-day; and may be recognized by those who duly seek it. It is not to be sought in an aggregate of all who take Christ's name, or even confess His Divinity. It is not to be found among the lesser religious bodies, which have broken away from larger organizations, and make no claim to be more than fragments. It is not the Eastern Church; it is not the Anglican; it is not both of them conjoined, together with the Church of Rome. Therefore, it must inevitably be this last Church; for there is no other possible claimant to the title. The argument is the "argument of exclusion"; and it is convincing.

But, furthermore, as the absence of organic unity is certain proof that the religious society, in which we observe it, is not Christ's Church, so its existence in a religious body stamps that body as the true Church of Christ. And the proof becomes more and more convincing as the society spreads more and more widely, and as the unity which it manifests is not merely in the present, but is also a oneness with its own past. A sect may be, every sect is, in the beginning, one. Those who form it must have something in

common, to join in separating from the parent body. But as they grow in numbers, as they extend from one country to another, as generation follows generation, only a Divine influence can prevent further divisions from taking place amongst them. And in a world-wide society, like the Christian Church, embracing, as it does, men of every race and class and prejudice, of the most varied intelligence and education, in every kind of circumstances and of surroundings, living on, too, from generation to generation, and from century to century, abiding unity can only be from God: the Church herself must be Divine. And it is plain, I think, to all unprejudiced observers that in the Catholic Church there is a wondrous and a perfect unity.

She is one in Faith. The charge, indeed, is commonly brought against her that independence and originality of thought are impossible to her members, because of the crushing uniformity of belief which she imposes on them. This is not the time to examine the accusation; but it testifies, at any rate, to the unity of religious faith amongst us. Not that all believe explicitly the same individual doctrines. Beyond the limits of the Church's authoritative teaching, there is a

wide field open to discussion; there have been, there are, rival schools of Catholic theology; there may be different, even contradictory, opinions as to whether one or other particular tenet is or is not contained in the Christian Revelation; even the explicit teaching of the Church will be brought home differently to different minds, according to their powers of intellect, and opportunities for gaining knowledge. But the disputations of the schools and religious controversy among Catholics are rarely concerned with revealed truths at all; they deal chiefly with inferences from them. Controversy is ever carried on with entire submission to Church authority. The disputants are ready to abide by her decision, if and when the Church sees fit to give a decision to them. Then there is a great body of revealed teaching, which all the children of the Church have learned explicitly and hold in common. No single truth which she proposes for belief may ever be called in question by any of her members. And, above all, her children see in her a Divinely appointed guide, who speaks to them with a living voice, which "can neither deceive nor be deceived". No wonder they have unity of Faith, not as an accidental fact, but as the necessary re-

sult of obedience to such a teacher, whom they listen to, within defined limits, as they would listen to their Divine Founder.

Further, the Catholic Church is one in Sacraments and Sacrifice. Wherever her temples and her ministers are to be found, there her children will find the same ministrations, to which all are everywhere admitted. There may be differences of language; there may be peculiarities of liturgy and ceremonial; but there is no difference as to the number, the nature, the efficacy of her Sacraments, and none as to the reality of her Sacrifice, or the value and effects of its oblation.

Again, she is one in government. Her local churches are, indeed, under the rule of local pastors. But they are joined together into provinces and nations; and all are united under one visible Head, who exercises a universal and supreme jurisdiction. We are not concerned here with the origin and rightfulness of this supremacy; it is enough at present that it exists in the Catholic Church, and that it secures a unity of Faith, of worship, and of government which it is vain to look for elsewhere.

But is she one with her own past? Is she the

same to-day, in Faith, in ritual, and in government, that she was a thousand, fifteen hundred years ago? I do not now inquire is she identical with the Church of Apostolic times. If she be, she is evidently the Church of Christ. But that inquiry is dependent on complex historical investigations, for which satisfactory data are often wanting, and it involves not a few much-discussed points of controversy. Nor is it necessary for our immediate purpose. Identity through a thousand years, over such a vast area, and in such a multitude of members, with such mysterious doctrines, and under such changing circumstances, is convincing proof of a special Divine protection; and if God be its author, the Church herself is Divine. Now, for a thousand and more years, during which her history is open to us, and documentary evidence is abundant, the Catholic Church has undergone no substantial change. Growth, development, there must be, if she lives; but in all essentials her glory is the accusation made so bitterly against her: "Semper eadem"—"ever the same". Two or three points there may be, in which adversaries may say she has added to her creed. They prove nothing. Are they, are they not, additions is in con-

troversy. Were it even granted that they are, what are they in the unchanging sameness of a thousand years? But we do not grant it. There is nothing in our belief, in our worship, in the government of our Church to-day, which would cause even a moment of surprise or an instant of hesitation in Columbanus, or Malachy of Armagh, or Anselm of Canterbury, or Francis of Assisi, or any of the saints and doctors and simple faithful of the ten last centuries.

This, then, is our first and all-sufficient argument. There is a visible Church of Christ on earth. It is one, not merely numerically but organically as well; one, that is, in Faith, sacraments, sacrifice, government, and historical identity; and it is organically one, not in fact only, but through an abiding principle by which that unity is permanently secured. Now, no religious body, as we have seen, except the Catholic Church, has that essential unity. Therefore, no other religious body can be the Church of Christ. And again, the unity of which we speak is so peculiarly the privilege of Christ's Church that it cannot be found in any other religious body. Now it is found, as we have shown, in the Catholic Church. Consequently,

the Catholic Church, and the Catholic Church only, is Christ's true Church.

Consider, further, that until the division between East and West, until the days of Photius and Cærularius, the visible society of Christ on earth, His Church, was the Catholic Church, united in communion and obedience with the See of Rome. Then came the separation: a word,[1] the Greeks complained, had been unlawfully added to the Creed; and there were some Western liturgical details to which they made objection. Therefore, they cut themselves off from Rome and the Churches in communion with her. What view are we to take of the result? Till then, the faithful, the bishops, the chief pastor, of the Latin Church had been members of the one true Church of Christ. Did they cease to be so when the Greeks withdrew from their communion? They had committed no act of schism; they still held the faith which had been held by the united and infallible Church, up to the days of separation; the Church of Christ did not perish then, or become invisible. The Latin Church, therefore, preserved its membership of Christ's Church; and since Christ's Church is

[1] The *filioque*.

one, and one only, the Latin Church alone was then the true Church of Christ. Now, see what follows. Until the religious trouble of the sixteenth century the Latin Church in communion with Rome was the one true Church. Till then there was one united Western Church, visible and infallible, under the obedience of the Bishop of Rome, and in full communion with him. And when Northern Europe, and then England and Scotland, separated from her, what was the condition of those who remained faithful to her? We must reason exactly as we did on the separation of Greeks and Latins, five centuries before. Roman Catholics continued to hold the faith which the whole Western Church had held until the Reformation, and which Church infallibility had kept free from error. They retained the Sacraments and Sacrifice, which all had held to be Divinely instituted. They still obeyed the authority which all had believed to have been set over them by God. They could not lose membership of the Church except through heresy or schism, and, clearly, they were guilty of neither. They must, then, have continued in the Church; and since the Church is visible, and is not composed of "branches," they and they alone

could constitute it. In the sixteenth century, therefore, as in the ninth and the eleventh, the Christian Church was that which remained united with the Roman See. Roman Catholics were then, and so they must be now, the one Church which Christ established.

And, finally, the Catholic Church alone is Christ's, because Christ's Church is infallible, as we have already seen; and only the Catholic Church makes claim to be so. In an able and singularly bitter attack, which Dr. Salmon, a former Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, makes on the Catholic Church, in his lectures on Church Infallibility, he says very truly: "The issues of the controversy mainly turn on one great question—I mean the question of infallibility of the Church. If that be decided against us our whole case is gone"; and the object of his book, as he says further on, is to demonstrate the proposition: "that God has appointed some one on earth able to give infallible guidance to religious truth, admits of no proof, and is destitute of all probability". On Dr. Salmon's showing, then, our case stands thus: If there be an infallible Church on earth, the Roman Catholic Church is that Church; and the controversy between Roman

Catholics and Protestants is ended, in favour of the former. Many Protestants, I know, and all Anglicans will refuse to follow him. But his inference, I am confident, is justified; as we shall see, if we examine it.

A Church might, indeed, claim infallibility, and yet be false; but a Church which disclaims it cannot be the Church of Christ: for Christ's Church is infallible. The infallibility of the true Church is, as we have seen, a doctrine revealed of God; and so the infallible, the true Church cannot disclaim or even doubt it. And, further, the true Church must claim infallibility. She must preach the Gospel, and declare that those shall be condemned who will not accept her teaching. She must determine controversies, anathematize heresies, define dogmas; and all this irrevocably. She must demand assent to her decisions, under the most grievous penalties. What teacher and judge, if not infallible, and claiming infallibility, would be justified in doing so? Consider now the various Churches, the various religious bodies, which hold themselves descended in legitimate succession from the Apostolic Church. The Catholic Church, and she alone, believes herself to be infallible; she,

and she only, claims for herself infallibility. All others, Greek, Anglican, Protestant, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Nonconformist—of whatever name and nature—put forward no such claim; indeed, profess openly they have no such privilege. On this ground, then, also, the Catholic Church is the true Church of Christ.

And now, let me sum up briefly the considerations on which we have just dwelt. Assuming, from previous lectures, that the "Kingdom of God," Christ's Church, the heir to the Divine promises, the chosen channel of Divine graces, is a visible society, existing upon earth even now, and seeing the many different religious bodies around us, the question is at once suggested: which among them all is the Church of Christ? How shall we identify her? In studying the foundation and constitution of the Church, we saw Christ willed she should be one and universal. She was to spread throughout the world, and endure throughout the ages; and yet she was to remain one through historic continuity, and one in her profession of revealed truth, in her sacraments and sacrifice, and in her government. And in no society but the Church of Christ can such unity be found; it is the work and gift of

God alone, and God will not, and cannot, authenticate a falsehood. The Church, too, is infallible in her teaching of revealed truth, and she must be conscious of and claim, as well as exercise, the Divine gift; the religious society which repudiates it is not Christ's Church; and if one only among religious societies lays claim to it, that society must be the Church of Christ. And then we saw that the Catholic Church, and she alone among all the Churches, fulfils these requirements; from which we infer with certainty that she and she only is Christ's true Church.

We shall inquire next into the teaching and governing authority of the Church, who the persons are in whom it vests, and what is its nature and its extension.

LECTURE VII.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE POPE.

We have now reached a point in our inquiry into the foundation and constitution of the Christian Church, where we know with entire certainty that the one visible Kingdom of Christ upon earth, His Church, is that of which we ourselves are members; and that in teaching and believing the revealed truths confided to her, that Church cannot err. We have reached a point, therefore, when we can appeal with confidence to the Catholic Church herself for assistance in our further inquiries. Hitherto, we have never had recourse to her authority. On the various questions which we have discussed her testimony is distinct and decisive. She believes and teaches the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament writings. She believes and teaches the Divinity of Christ. She believes and teaches the foundation of the Church as a Divine Society —one in Faith, ritual, and government. She

believes and teaches its visible continuance until the end of time; and she believes and teaches its infallibility in belief and teaching. But we have not appealed to her authority. We wished to mark the steps by which an impartial student of religion might be logically led on, through a critical investigation of the Church's origins and of the present condition of the Catholic Church, to a reasoned acceptance of her claims and doctrines. I was anxious to avoid argument "in a circle". I was not seeking to explain why and how we Catholics, educated and uneducated alike, hold and profess the truths we have discussed in previous Lectures. In childhood, in youth, even in maturer years, we do not, for instance, believe Our Blessed Lord's Divinity because of the proofs that may be drawn from His statements about Himself, His character, the wonders that He worked, and His Resurrection. Our assent, as we may have occasion to see later on, is very much more simple. But I was concerned to show how rigorously scientific the Catholic Faith itself is, what a critical examination it is prepared to undergo, and how satisfactorily we can justify our religious position to ourselves and to inquirers, when need for justification arises.

Now, however, that the infallible authority of the Catholic Church in the domain of revealed truth has been demonstrated, there can be no reason why we should not in future make use of that authority. We might do so, even to the exclusion of every other argument. We noted, as a characteristic of Christ's teaching, that He simply asserted the truths which He put forward : He offered no proofs in their favour ; they were guaranteed by His Divine infallibility. Similarly, when once the infallibility of the Catholic Church has been made clear to us, we are bound to assent to her belief and teaching of revealed doctrines, though she advanced no other proof, and we saw none other ourselves, in support of them. Her living voice is warrant for our assent, and makes it obligatory. But, as we have already seen, she receives no new revelation. Her teaching office is to preserve and to explain the revelation made to the Apostles. And because that revelation, in all its main features, and most even of its details, has been enshrined in the New Testament writings, and because the accurate understanding and authentic interpretation of those writings has in large part come down to us in Catholic tradition, we can almost always corroborate the

authority of the Church from those other sources. Truths, too, are proposed to us by the Church at times, as contained in revelation, which are antecedently probable, or even capable of a rational demonstration; and there is no reason why we should reject arguments that may render our assent both easier and clearer.

And we proceed to apply this method to the question which is to occupy us to-day—the person or persons in whom the supreme authority of the Church is vested. Infallibility of belief, or passive infallibility, as it is often called, resides evidently in the whole body of the Church's members. The Church is passively infallible, is Divinely preserved from error, when her children hold, universally, any truth as a doctrine of Divine Faith, or reject any error as certainly opposed to it. There remains to be considered the active authority of the Church, her authority in teaching and in governing; and we are to examine now the position, which we Catholics maintain, that all such authority is concentrated, though not exclusively, in the Bishop and See of Rome; that the Pope is infallible teacher and supreme ruler of Christ's Church on earth.

And first it seems antecedently likely that

some such teacher and ruler must exist. Christ planned and founded a visible and imperishable society, in which He Himself was supreme visible Teacher and Ruler, while He lived on earth. We should be disposed, therefore, to expect that He would make the office a part of the Church's constitution, and provide for successors who should occupy it. This is no proof, of course, that He actually did so; but it prepares us to consider favourably any arguments which go to show that He did. Then, further, He determined that His Kingdom should be universal, and should be one, should be spread over the earth, yet with all its parts bound together, in a common Faith, into one organized social whole. To secure such Catholic unity, no means would appear better adapted than one supreme visible head. The object could, doubtless, have been obtained in other ways—by the direct controlling action of the Holy Spirit on all the members of the society, or by entrusting all authority to a Senate or a Council. But the balance of advantage and the parallelism of the Theocracy and of the Hebrew Monarchy would point to the likelihood of government by an individual. And we are confirmed in this view, when we find one

among the Apostles singled out for a very special prominence by Our Lord Himself, and acknowledged in a very marked manner as a leader by the other Apostles. It is not without significance, that, alone of the Apostles, Simon, the son of Jona, had a name selected for him by Christ, and that the name was Rock or Peter. He was one of the chosen companions of Our Lord at the Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden. When Our Lord addresses the Apostles, it is invariably to Peter that He speaks. When the Apostles would address or question Christ, it is almost always St. Peter who is allowed to do it. In the lists of the Apostles, which all four Evangelists give us, St. Peter is placed always first. When tribute is to be paid, Peter is bidden by Our Lord to pay it for both himself and Christ.[1] On every occasion, when Peter is mentioned in the New Testament with any other of the Apostles, the phrases recur: "Peter with the eleven,"[2] or "Simon and they who were with him,"[3] or "Peter and the two sons of Zebedee,"[4] or "Simon Peter and Thomas, who is called Didymus, and Nathanael,"[5] or "Simon Peter and

[1] Matt. xvii. 26. [2] Acts ii. 14. [3] Luke viii. 45.
[4] Matt. xxvi. 37. [5] John xxi. 2.

the other disciple whom Jesus loved".[1] After the Ascension, St. Peter seems to assume at once, and as of course, the position of chief of the Apostles. He proposes the election of a successor to Judas. He preaches the first Apostolic discourse on the Feast of Pentecost. He works the first Apostolic miracle on the lame man at the Temple gate. He defends the Apostles when brought prisoners before the Council. He receives the first Gentiles into the infant Church, and lays down the principle that Gentiles are to be admitted. He pronounces against the continuance of the Jewish ceremonial law, as an unbearable "yoke on the necks of the disciples". He seems to take unquestioned a place among them, which recalls—though at infinite distance —the place which Christ had held before the Passion; and it is a place we must find it difficult to understand or to explain, unless on the ground of a Divine appointment. I do not say that this New Testament evidence is conclusive proof of a primacy of teaching authority and of jurisdiction conferred by Christ upon St. Peter; but it does, I think, point to a prominence and a pre-eminence which are scarcely to be distinguished from such

[1] John xx. 2.

a primacy; and, whatever the privilege was, it was given seemingly for the welfare of the Church, and cannot, therefore, in the absence of proof, be supposed to perish when St. Peter died.

But the Gospels offer us a more convincing argument. They tell us of a plain promise made by Christ to Peter that He would give him supreme authority in the Church—supreme, and therefore infallible, authority to teach; supreme authority to govern. And they tell us also of the solemn fulfilment of the promise.

You remember the questions which Our Lord put to His disciples, when He came with them "into the quarters of Cæsarea Philippi": "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?"; and, a little later: "But whom do you say that I am?"; and then St. Peter's answer: "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God". "And Jesus answering said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona. . . . And I say to thee: that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also

in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."[1] It is clear, from Our Lord's words, that He regarded St. Peter's declaration of belief in His Divinity as of great importance, and as deserving of a great reward. And He goes on to say what this reward will be: "Thou art Peter (Cephas or rock, in the language which Christ spoke), and upon this rock (Cephas) I will build My Church". In the original there is a play upon the name, which is lost to us in English, but is clear in some other translations. "Tu es Pierre, et sur cette pierre je bâtirai mon église," renders it precisely. St. Peter, therefore, is chosen to be the foundation on which Christ will raise His Church; "and the gates of hell," the powers of evil, "shall not prevail against her". St. Peter is to be to the Christian Church what a rock foundation is to an ordinary edifice—the principle of stability, unity, permanence; and, because he is so, no enemy "shall prevail against her". Now the unity and stability, and therefore the continued existence, of a society are due chiefly to the authority which binds its elements together. And, if an essential function of the society be to maintain and teach

[1] Matt. xvi. 13.

a body of doctrines or opinions, whether philosophical or religious, the supreme authority must have power to declare what those doctrines or opinions are. Christ Himself is the one Divine foundation of His Church. "Other foundation," as St. Paul tells the Corinthians,[1] "no man can lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus." And Christ is the foundation, not only because He purchased the Church with His Precious Blood, and framed her constitution, and instituted her Sacraments, but also because He taught her all revealed truth with infallible authority, and ruled over her with a jurisdiction from which there was no appeal. In the former of those prerogatives, he called no one, neither St. Peter nor any other, to take any part. In the latter—supreme authority to teach and govern—He promises, in our text, that St. Peter shall have a share. And He goes on to emphasize, in the words which follow, the privilege that He will bestow: "I will give to thee," He says, "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven". No metaphor was better known to the Jews than the keys, as a symbol of authority.[2] They were as familiar with its meaning as we are, when we

[1] 1 Cor. III. 11. [2] Is. XXII. 22.

present the keys of a city to the sovereign, on his entrance into it. St. Peter, then, is to receive the keys of the kingdom, supreme authority to teach and govern under Christ.

And after the Resurrection, the promise was fulfilled. Before our Lord ascended into heaven He entrusted His whole flock, sheep and lambs, to the guardianship and guidance of St. Peter. As He had associated Peter with Himself, when He used the metaphors of "foundation" and of "keys," so does He here, where He speaks of the sheepfold, whose supreme pastor He Himself is. "Feed My lambs," He says to Peter, "be the shepherd of My lambs," "feed My sheep".[1] No member of the Church of Christ is excepted from the commission; the Apostle is to feed and shepherd all. He is to teach them the doctrines which Christ taught, to administer to them the sacred rites which Christ instituted, to govern them under the laws which Christ laid down. Where we are to note that Christ had already, on a previous occasion, bestowed on all the Apostles jointly the Apostolic mission and Apostolic powers: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you," He had said to

[1] John xxi. 15.

them; "Receive ye the Holy Ghost, whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained".[1] Now He addresses Himself particularly to Peter; and, as at Cæsarea Philippi, on eliciting from Peter a profession of Faith in His Divinity, He gave him the promise of the primacy, so here, on eliciting a protestation of love, He bestows on him the promised dignity.

I need not tell you that controversy rages fiercely round these two texts, for it is felt that, if they are admitted to prove a supreme governing and teaching power conferred on Peter, there must still be someone in Christ's Church invested with that power. The constitution of the Church has not changed. Such as she was in substance and essentials in the days of the Apostles, such she must be to-day. She cannot become other than she was. If Christ founded a monarchy, and made St. Peter to be ruler over it, infallible and supreme, then there is to-day a successor to Peter, in Christ's Church on earth; and that successor can only be the Bishop of the See of Rome. No other has ever claimed the title; for no other has any claim been ever made. Hence

[1] John xx. 21.

it was maintained by some—while disputants were still willing to allow the authenticity of both passages and the undeniable inference from them of Peter's primacy—that the privilege had ceased with the Apostle. His dignity, it was said, was personal to himself, and passed away with him; or it was needed in the special circumstances of the infant Church; it was no longer necessary and was, therefore, withdrawn, when the Apostle died. But such opinions find few, if any, to support or follow them to-day. If Roman claims are to be repudiated, the primacy of St. Peter, it is felt, must be denied. And so the most varied explanations have been invented to escape the cogency of the texts, culminating in the theory of some hard-pressed controversialists that the passage in St. Matthew, which contains the promise made to Peter, is unauthentic. But I shall not weary you by entering further into this detail of our subject. I need only say that there is no argument of the smallest scientific value against the genuineness of the passage; and add, that the undivided and infallible Church, before the schism of East and West, and then the Western Church, until the Protestant Reformation, accepted both the texts as equally

authentic, and attached to both the dogmatic meaning which we have given them.

Besides, the whole temper of the Church, as recorded in her history, has ever been to recognize, both in fact and theory, the primacy of Rome, and to recognize a primacy because the Roman Bishop is the successor of Peter. Communication with the Roman See was carried on with difficulty in the days of persecution. We have little documentary evidence concerning the Christian Church during the three first centuries. But we have enough to show us the position of pre-eminence already occupied by the Church and Bishop of Rome; and when persecution ceases, the evidence of an acknowledged primacy becomes overwhelming.

Towards the close of the first century, during the lifetime, therefore, of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, dissensions arose in the Church of Corinth. The faithful of that Church sought advice and direction, not from the living Apostle, but from Rome. And we still possess the Epistle of St. Clement, in which, as Bishop of the Roman Church, he prescribes what the Corinthians are to do; in which he exhorts them to obey in those things "which through the Holy

Spirit he has written to them," and declares that "Christ speaks to them through him," and that those who refuse to listen sin gravely.[1] At the beginning of the second century, the Martyr Ignatius, in a letter to the Romans, speaks of their Church as presiding over all the Churches, and of himself as anxious to approve whatever they may teach and order.[2] In the same century, Polycarp of Smyrna, St. John's disciple, voyages to Rome to consult with Pope Anicetus on some Eastern controversies,[3] and the Martyrs of Lyons send to Pope Eleutherius, asking his assistance in combating the errors of Montanus.[4] Even heretics, like Marcion and the Montanists, make their way to Rome, in order, if they may, to secure Roman recognition.[5] At the close of the century, St. Irenæus, a witness to the belief of Asia and of Gaul, having asked how true tradition may be distinguished from false, makes answer that it will be enough to examine what is held by the Church of Rome, since "all other Churches must

[1] Ad Corinth., c. 59; Lightfoot, ii. p. 170.

[2] Ad Rom.; Lightfoot, ii. pp. 189, 203.

[3] Euseb., "Hist. Eccl.," v. c. 24 (ed. Burton).

[4] *Ibid.*, c. 3.

[5] "Epiph. Haer.," 42, n. 1; M. G., XLI. 695.

agree with her, because of her greater authority ".[1] At the same time, Pope Victor urges the Bishops of Asia to hold synods for the settlement of the Paschal controversy; and when the Bishops of Asia Minor refuse to adopt the Western usage, Victor lays a command upon them, and seeks to enforce it by excommunication.[2] In the third century, Tertullian speaks of the Pope as "Pontifex Maximus"—that is, the "Bishop of Bishops"—and tells us of his issuing "a peremptory edict" concerning absolution from sin, and intended for the guidance of the Church universal.[3] And Tertullian's disciple, the Martyr Cyprian, writes to Pope Cornelius of the Roman Church as "the Chair of Peter, the principal Church, whence the unity of the priesthood took its rise, whose faith is praised in the preaching of the Apostles, to whom faithlessness cannot have access,"[4] and he urges Pope St. Stephen to excommunicate and depose Martian, Bishop of Arles, and to appoint another Bishop in his stead.[5]

[1] Iren., "Contra Haer.," III. c. 3; M. G., VII. 849.
[2] Euseb., "Hist. Eccl.," V. c. 24.
[3] Tertull., "De Pudic.," c. 1; M. L., II. 980.
[4] Ep., 59, n. 14; alit. XII.; M. L., III. 818.
[5] *Ibid.*, 67; M. L., IV. 399.

In the same century Pope Stephen's decision on the validity of heretical baptism overcame the opposition of Cyprian, Firmilian, and many African and Eastern Bishops, and was received by the whole Church as a rule of Faith and practice. At the same time, we find Origen and Denis of Alexandria writing to the Roman Bishop to make a profession of belief and clear themselves of all suspicion of error.[1] We have St. Athanasius and St. Peter of Alexandria seeking the assistance and protection of Rome.[2] We have Bishops deposed by local Councils and carrying their appeals to Rome[3]—appeals received and dealt with by the Roman See, and solemnly approved of by the Decrees of Sardica.[4] We have heretics and schismatics hurrying to Rome in order to snatch a favourable decision from the Roman Bishop, which could be set against, and would override, the decision of local Churches. When we can raise a little the veil which hides from us the Church life and organization of those three first

[1] Euseb., "Hist. Eccl.," VI. 36; Athan., "Ep. de Sent. Dion.," n. 13; M. G., XXV. 499.

[2] Hieron., Ep., 127, n. 5; M. L., XXII. 1090.

[3] Cyprian, Ep., 67; M. L., iii. 986.

[4] Harduin, I. 638, and cf. Hefele, I. p. 649 sqq.

centuries, we find the Church and Bishop of Rome in very much the same assured position of authority to which the following centuries testify with overwhelming evidence. Nor is it an authority in the making. Wherever we can observe it, it appears to be already settled, traditional, and acknowledged. Even angry outbursts, like those of Firmilian, in the controversy with Pope Stephen, about the middle of the third century, are confirmation of the claims which Rome put forward. When he tells us that Stephen "prides himself on the place of his Episcopate, and contends that he holds the succession of Peter, upon whom the foundations of the Church were laid"; when he accuses him of "provoking quarrels and dissensions" by his decision, "through the Churches of the whole world"; when he charges him with "thinking that all may be excommunicated" by him, we can see that he recognizes him as the Chief Bishop of Christendom, does not venture directly to call in question his authority, or even hint that the assertion of it is a novelty.

And, when the age of persecution ended, when communications with Rome were rendered easy by favour of the Civil Government, and when

the Bishop and Church of Rome were at liberty to exercise their privileges more openly, the two-fold primacy—of teaching and of jurisdiction—appears not merely universally admitted, but is everywhere held to be decisive. I do not propose quoting individual fathers—the great Bishops and Priests of the early Church, who are witnesses to its faith, and on whose teaching the Church's faith was established. In East and West their testimony is clear and unanimous. Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil, Chrysostom and Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret and Chrysologus, Ambrose, Augustin, Jerome, the great Popes, Damasus, Leo, Innocent, Celestine, and a multitude of others: all are at one in proclaiming the prerogative of Peter, and the ordered succession to Peter's rights in the See of Rome. But I prefer to lay before you the collective witness of great Church assemblies, in which the Church's Faith found public and solemn expression.

In the Council of Ephesus (ann. 431), composed mainly of Eastern Bishops over whom, by appointment of Pope Celestine, St. Cyril of Alexandria presided, sentence against Nestorius was introduced in these terms: "Being necessarily constrained by the Canons, and by the letter of

our most holy Father and fellow minister, Celestine, the Bishop of the Church of the Romans, we have, with many tears, come to this mournful sentence against him" (Nestorius). And, Nestorius having been deposed, "Philip, priest and Legate of the Apostolic Chair, continued: No one doubts, yea all ages know, that the holy and most blessed Peter, the prince and head of the Apostles, the pillar of the Faith, the foundation of the Catholic Church, received the keys of the Kingdom from our Lord Jesus Christ . . . who, even until now, and always, lives and judges in his successors. Wherefore our holy and most blessed Pope, Celestine Bishop, his successor in order, and holder of his place, has sent us to this holy synod, to supply for his own presence."[1] And, twenty years later, in the Council of Chalcedon, after Pope Leo's letter to Flavian of Constantinople had been read, in which the errors of Eutyches were condemned, the six hundred Bishops, Orientals almost all, cried out: "This is the faith of the Fathers; this is the faith of the Apostles. Thus we all believe; thus do the orthodox believe. Anathema to him who believes not thus.

[1] Harduin, I. 147.

Thus hath Peter spoken through Leo."[1] Again, in the third Council of Constantinople (ann. 680), presided over by Papal Legates, and numbering between two and three hundred Eastern Bishops, Pope Agatho's condemnation of the Monothelite heresy having been read and confirmed, the Bishops exclaim: "Through Agatho Peter hath spoken"; and to the Pope himself they write: "Therefore, unto thee, as Bishop of the chief See and of the Universal Church, standing on the firm rock of Faith, we leave to determine what is to be done; acquiescing gladly in the Letters of true confession sent to the most pious Emperor by your fatherly Blessedness, which Letters we accept as though Divinely written by the Head of the Apostles".[2] The General Councils of Lyons and Florence, in which both Latins and Greeks took part, teach the same doctrine; the latter in a solemn definition: We also define, it says, "that the holy Apostolic See and the Roman Pontiff possess a primacy over the whole world, and that the Roman Pontiff himself is the successor of Blessed Peter, prince of the Apostles, and true Vicar of Christ, Head of the whole Church, Father and Teacher of all

[1] Harduin, II. 305. [2] *Ibid.*, III. 1422.

Christians; and that to him was given, in Blessed Peter, by our Lord Jesus Christ, full power to feed and rule and govern the Universal Church, as is also set forth in the Acts of General Councils and in the Sacred Canons".[1] And, finally, as placing the question beyond all doubt and controversy for us Catholics, we have the definitions of the Vatican Council in our own day: "If anyone shall say that Blessed Peter the Apostle was not appointed by Christ the Lord chief of all the Apostles and visible head of the whole Church Militant, or that he received from the same Jesus Christ our Lord a primacy of honour only, and not directly and immediately one of true and proper jurisdiction, let him be anathema".[2] And: "If anyone shall say that it is not by institution of Christ the Lord Himself, and so of Divine right, that Blessed Peter should have a perpetual line of successors in the primacy over the Universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is not Blessed Peter's successor in that primacy, let him be anathema".[3] And: "If anyone shall say that the Roman Pontiff has the duty only of inspecting and directing, but not full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the Universal Church, not only

[1] Denz., n. 694. [2] *Ibid.*, n. 1823. [3] *Ibid.*, n. 1825.

in things which concern Faith and morals, but in those also which relate to the discipline and government of the Church, which is spread throughout the whole world; or that he has only the principal part, but not the entire fullness of this supreme power; or that his power is not ordinary and immediate, both over each and all the Churches, and over each and all the pastors and the faithful, let him be anathema".[1] Then, as though the infallible teaching authority of the Pope were not sufficiently defined in his primacy of jurisdiction, there is the further explicit definition: "Faithfully adhering to the tradition handed down from the beginning of the Christian Faith, for the glory of God our Saviour, the exaltation of the Catholic religion, and the salvation of Christian peoples, with the approval of the Holy Council we teach and define it to be a Divinely revealed dogma, that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks ex cathedra, that is, when in discharge of his office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, he defines in virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, a doctrine concerning Faith or morals, to be held by the Universal Church, is, through the Divine assistance, promised to him in Blessed

[1] Denz., n. 1831.

Peter, possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed His Church to be endowed, in defining doctrines concerning Faith and morals: and that therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are of themselves, and not through the consent of the Church, irreformable. And if anyone—which may God avert—should presume to contradict this our definition: let him be anathema."[1]

Other conciliar definitions we might quote to the same effect, as we might have quoted a vast mass of ecclesiastical witnesses scattered up and down through the Church's history. But we have already quoted more than sufficient for our purpose. I wished to prove that in the Church of Christ, which we have shown to be the Catholic Church, one man, and that the Bishop of Rome, enjoys a primacy; that he has supreme power for the government of the Church, and that in his teaching of revealed truth he is infallible. We conceive, indeed, of these as distinct prerogatives, though one does in fact include the other. In a society, of whose very essence is unity of Faith, and which cannot itself err in the revealed doctrines which it believes

[1] Denz., n. 1839.

and teaches, the supreme governing authority must clearly, within the domain of revelation, be an infallible teacher and an infallible judge of controversies. We began, then, by noting that it was antecedently probable Christ would appoint some one supreme ruler in His Church, and would provide for a perpetual succession of such rulers. Christ's own attitude towards St. Peter, as recorded in the Gospels, implies a quite singular pre-eminence conferred on that Apostle. So, too, does the manner in which the New Testament writers refer always to him, and the leading position which he assumes, and which the other Apostles yield unquestioningly to him, after the Ascension. But we are not left to inferences or surmises. In the plainest language Our Lord first promises, and then bestows, the twofold primacy on Peter; and from the nature of the case, and from Christ's words themselves, we gather that the primacy is to continue in the Church for ever. But, in what See? The belief of the Church has ever been that the Bishop of Rome is the successor of St. Peter and the heir to his primacy. No other See has ever made any claim to it. Such too, we saw, was the opinion of the earliest

Church Fathers, whose scanty writings have been preserved to us from the days of persecution. Such was the opinion of the great Bishops and Doctors of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, when persecution had died away. Then, and later, the action of Popes supposed, and was based upon it, and Œcumenical Councils, first in the East and later in the West—Councils of the undivided Church and Councils of the Latin Communion—have solemnly and unequivocally declared and defined the doctrine.

Assuming, then, as already proved, that Christ's Church, the Catholic Church, is infallible in believing and teaching revealed doctrines of Faith and morals, the personal supremacy and personal infallibility of the Pope—that is, of the lawfully elected Bishop of Rome—is for us Catholics a defined dogma of our religion. The teaching Church proclaimed it in the Council of the Vatican; and, even were it possible to entertain a misgiving about the Vatican decrees themselves, the whole Catholic Church, the Bishops, without even one exception, and the Faithful, accepted the definition, and believed it. Not a single Catholic Bishop refused or hesitated to promulgate the doctrine. A handful of German priests and

a few thousands of German and Swiss laymen rejected it, and became "Old Catholics"; they created scarcely a ripple on the vast expanse of Catholic unity. Had we even, therefore, no other argument, the Vatican definition alone, and the infallible Church's acceptance of and faith in it, would be abundantly sufficient. But we have all the other arguments as well, which we have been just considering; and it is difficult to understand how any impartial mind, which accepts the New Testament writings, and believes in Church infallibility, can resist their cogency. I do not say that any one or other text of the Gospels, or any isolated facts in the Gospels or Acts of the Apostles, must necessarily convince a fair-minded inquirer. I do not, indeed, think that any of the great truths of the Catholic faith can be satisfactorily demonstrated by single texts or incidents in Scripture. But the cumulative weight of New Testament references to St. Peter seems to me well-nigh irresistible. They assign him a position apart from and above the other Apostles, which we cannot explain on grounds of age or ability or personal qualities of any kind: we are driven back on Divine appointment. And, if a Headship were given to Peter, for the welfare of

the Church, the Headship did not die with him. Besides, the belief and teaching of the Church are a convincing interpretation of the Scriptures; and in the East and West, in sermons, in formal treatises, in great gatherings of Bishops, in the conduct and determination of religious controversies, in the ordinary social life and work of the Church, we see the conviction growing more distinct and more emphatic that, in the Gospels of St. Matthew and of St. John, we have the revelation of a primacy conferred on Peter, a primacy to be continued in his successors for ever. The Councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople express the faith of the undivided Church: Lyons and Florence bear witness for the Western. Evangelical Protestantism is logical, when it rejects their testimony, and reads its own into the Bible; but what of the Greek and Anglican positions?

The Pope, then, or Bishop of Rome, has a Divinely given primacy. It is not conferred on him by the Church; it is not entrusted to him by his electors. It comes to each Pope, as it did to Peter, immediately from God, when he is validly elected, and because, by such election, he is St. Peter's successor.

And what is the primacy? First, it is not sinlessness. Christ could, of course, had He so willed it, have made His Vicars sinless. He has chosen not to do so. There have been grave scandals in the history of the Roman See—not so many, not so grave, as in the history of other kingdoms; and they have been exaggerated grossly for purposes of controversy. But, in any case, they have no point of contact with the subject of the present lecture. Holiness of life commends all those who teach and govern; but it is not essential to their office. It is not infallibility, it is not supreme, legislative, judicial, or executive authority. It is not even a condition precedent to the valid or lawful exercise of any of them. And Christ our Lord has promised these latter gifts, not holiness of life, to St. Peter, and to St. Peter's successors.

Again, the primacy does not involve the privilege of inspiration. No doubt God's providence over His Church will lead Him, at special times and under special circumstances, to interfere actively in its government. He may move authority to define a doctrine, or He may restrain it. He may guide it to frame a law, or to repeal one. He may guarantee executive acts

against imprudence, timidity, or obstinacy. He often exercises a similar special providence even over individuals. But it is not inspiration, as the term is applied to Holy Scripture. It does not make God the author of the acts, or law, or definition.

Nor does the primacy suppose any new revelation. Revelation is the unveiling of truth by God to His creatures; and there is no new revelation where no new truth is revealed; and no new truth is needed for the exercise of the primacy.

That primacy, therefore, is nothing other than supreme authority—supreme authority in teaching, which is necessarily infallible; and supreme authority in governing, which is the power to legislate, to judge, and execute the laws, without appeal to a superior. The latter, in the Church, includes the former; but, as we have already said, the ideas are distinct, and the Vatican Council defines and explains each separately.

And next, when does the Pope, according to the Council, speak infallibly? He must speak in "his office of Pastor and Teacher of all Christians". It cannot be as a friend or a private theologian, or as Bishop of Rome, or

Primate of Italy; it must be as successor of St. Peter in his headship of the whole Church. And he must speak, and show clearly that he speaks, "with supreme Apostolical authority". It is not enough to speak as Head of the Church, which he may do, and does at times, even when speaking only as Prefect or President of a Roman Congregation. It is not enough to use his teaching authority in exhorting, advising, or instructing the whole body of the faithful. He must make use of it in its highest form, and to the fullest extent in which it has been bestowed upon him. And, hence, he must "define," that is, put an end to all discussion; he must decide irrevocably. Then, too, the doctrine he defines must be "concerned with Faith or morals," and with Faith or morals as contained in the revelation which was given to the Apostles. His gift extends only to the truths which were entrusted to the Church at her foundation, and to such other truths as may be necessary for the maintenance of the original deposit. And he must require that the doctrines so defined shall be "held"—held, that is, with a firm interior assent —"by the universal Church". As Chief Pastor of the Church he may, of course, teach in-

dividuals and local Churches; he may prohibit a doctrine to be taught, or he may impose silence on a controversy. But in none of these things is his infallibility involved. He is only infallible when he demands assent, and demands assent from all the Church's children. If all these conditions be fulfilled we have an infallible definition; and such a definition, the Vatican tells us, is "irreformable"—not liable to modification or revision—of itself, and at once, not through the Church's subsequent acceptance and approval of it.

The Pope has, further, a primacy of jurisdiction; he not only teaches, he governs, the Church, under Christ, without hindrance from, or appeal to, any other authority. As in the civil state, so in the Church, supreme authority, in whomsoever it may vest, must make laws when needed, apply them to individual cases, and see to their proper execution. This, too, is the function of the Pope, within his sphere of jurisdiction. For his power is not unlimited. It is confined within the purpose for which the Church has been established. The power of the State is determined by the object for which the State exists; its authority extends to everything

which is necessary for the existence, and even for the well-being, of the commonwealth. Now the Church is a spiritual society, whose object is the spiritual welfare of souls. Things spiritual, therefore, constitute the native sphere of Church and Papal jurisdiction; things temporal belong to it only in so far as they have a bearing on the spiritual. But, within that sphere, the jurisdiction of the Pope—legislative, judicial, and executive—is supreme. There is no power within Christ's Church which he cannot exercise. It is given him directly by God; it is not delegated to him by the Church. It is universal, as extending to all the members of the Church, wherever they may be, and of whatever order, class, or dignity. And it is immediate; he may exercise it over whom he wills, without the intervention of any local, and, therefore, intermediate authority.

He may also, nay he must, make use of instruments—individuals, and congregations or committees—to carry on his government. He could not himself alone meet the needs of such a vast organization. And he can share his jurisdiction with others. Infallibility is his incommunicable prerogative; he can give no part

of it to his Cardinals, no part to his most important and most trusted congregations. But the power to make spiritual laws, and issue precepts, and grant dispensations, to exercise judicial functions, and to execute justice, he must delegate in part to different sections of the machinery by which he rules. But he does not, and he cannot, divest himself of any the least portion of the jurisdiction which Christ has given him. He remains always the supreme governor, as he is the supreme and infallible teacher of Christ's Church.

LECTURE VIII.

THE AUTHORITY OF BISHOPS.

We saw something in our last lecture of the position which the Bishop of Rome holds in the Church of Christ. He becomes, on his election to the Roman Bishopric, the successor of St. Peter, and, as St. Peter's successor, he is invested with a primacy of teaching and of governing authority over the universal Church. Within the limits of the Christian Revelation he cannot err in what he proposes to the Church as doctrines to be believed, and, within the constitution given to the Church of Christ, he has supreme legislative, judicial, and executive authority.

But in Christ's Church, as we see it, and as we know it in its history, the Bishop of Rome is not sole teacher, he is not sole ruler. The Divine commission, "Preach the Gospel," was not spoken to St. Peter only; it was addressed to all

of the Apostles. The power to bind and to loose was not promised to St. Peter alone; it was promised to all the Twelve. And the Apostles were not mere delegates of Peter in teaching and in governing; their authority was given to them by Christ Himself. St. Peter did, indeed, receive a primacy for himself and for his successors. Under Christ it was supreme, plenary, and independent. But it was not the sole authority, although supreme. Side by side with it, subordinate to it, and therefore dependent upon it, was the authority which Christ gave to others also, and which He willed to continue in His Church for ever.

The Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles—all show us very clearly that Christ Himself appointed a body of teachers and rulers for the Society He was founding. He did not establish the Society, and invest it with an authority to teach and govern, which it might transfer wholly or in part to delegates, as we may conceive to be the case in civil States. He Himself appointed the governors and teachers, who were to build up the Church; and these, in turn, were to make provision for their successors. It is quite obvious that Christ had no thought of

establishing a pure democracy. In considering the primacy conferred upon St. Peter, and the Roman Bishops, in succession to him, it was made clear that "the Kingdom" is a monarchy. If we consider now the appointment of the Apostles, we find that there are to be subordinate authorities, entrusted with a share of the teaching and ruling powers bestowed upon St. Peter. "All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth," Christ says to them, after His resurrection; "Going therefore teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world."[1] He commissions the Apostles to preach, to baptize, to direct believers in the way of obedience to the Christian law; and He promises to be with them in doing so until the end of time. Clearly, He contemplates a perpetual continuance of the office to which He is appointing them; and, equally clearly, He must will that they shall have successors for ever in it. Besides, as we have had already occasion to note, the Constitution of

[1] Matt. xxviii. 18.

Christ's Church cannot undergo any substantial change. As He established it, with its Divinely appointed teachers and rulers, so, in the absence of all evidence to the contrary, we must suppose it will remain until the end. And this, indeed, is a defined dogma of our Faith. "If any one shall say," the Council of Trent declares, "that in the Catholic Church there is not a hierarchy, instituted by a Divine ordinance, and consisting of Bishops, priests, and ministers: let him be anathema." And, "If any one shall say that Bishops are not superior to priests, or have not the power to confirm or ordain, or that the power which they have is common to them with priests, let him be anathema".[1] It is, therefore, of Catholic faith that there is, and ever will be, in the Church a governing authority, embodied in Bishops, priests, and ministers or deacons: distinct Offices and Orders, whether they are held by different individuals, or held as they so often are by one. For every Bishop is at once Bishop, priest, and minister combined.

But though the doctrine is of faith, and long-continued practice marks clearly the distinction between priests and Bishops, it is not so easy to

[1] Sess. XXIII., can. 6 and 7; Denz., 966-7.

distinguish them in Apostolic times. The authority of the Apostles themselves is clearly recognized in all the Churches. It is certain, too, from the Acts of the Apostles, and from the Epistles, particularly St. Paul's pastoral Epistles, that there were persons in authority in all the local Churches; though it is not always easy to determine from the New Testament writings alone what their precise functions were. They are variously called: at one time "presbyters," at another "Bishops"; and it would seem that the same persons were called now by one name, again by another. We are not now concerned with the Order of deacons, of which the origin and original duties are set out in the Acts of the Apostles. Nor with the individuals possessed of very special spiritual gifts: of prophecy, of healing, of tongues, of discerning of spirits, and the like; whom St. Paul speaks of frequently in his greater Epistles. Such gifts, or "charismata," wonderful manifestations of Divine grace and religious life, in the infant Church, were not necessarily elements or even accompaniments of Church authority. Our difficulty lies in distinguishing those two first Orders of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, which the Council of Trent has told us are of Divine

institution: the Order of Bishops and the Order of Priests; and in assigning to each its proper powers and duties. Of Paul and Barnabas we are told in the Acts that they "ordained presbyters or priests in every Church," which they established in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch.[1] A little later Paul and Barnabas "go unto the Apostles, and presbyters to Jerusalem".[2] After the Council, in which "the Apostles and presbyters were gathered together, to consider" the controversies referred to them, the decree of the Council was issued in the names of the "Apostles and the presbyters brethren".[3] Later again, St. Paul "calls to him the presbyters of the Church of Ephesus," and, in the course of his address to them, he says: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock in which the Holy Ghost hath made you Bishops to rule the Church of God".[4] His Epistle to the Philippians is sent to "all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi with the Bishops and deacons".[5] He bids Timothy, "Not neglect the grace that is in thee, which was given thee with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery,"[6] or priesthood.

[1] Acts IV. 23. [2] *Ibid.*, XV. 2. [3] *Ibid.*, 23.
[4] *Ibid.*, XX. 28. [5] Phil. I. 1. [6] 1 Tim. IV. 14.

He reminds Titus, "that for this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst ordain priests (or presbyters) in every city".[1] He declares: "If a man desireth the office of a Bishop he desireth a good work,"[2] and he then proceeds to describe the qualifications of a Bishop. "Let the priests," he says, further on, "that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in teaching."[3] And St. Peter writes, in his first Epistle "to the strangers dispersed through Pontas, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia, elect": "The presbyters therefore, that are among you, I beseech, who am myself also a presbyter . . . feed the flock of God, which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly . . . being made a pattern to the flock from the heart".[4] But I need not further multiply quotations. From those which I have made we may, I think, gather that it would be difficult to distinguish, on New Testament evidence, between the Bishops and the presbyters or priests, to whom the New Testament so often makes reference. It is possible that the names were

[1] Titus I. 5. [2] 1 Tim. III. 1.
[3] *Ibid.*, v. 17. [4] 1 Pet. v. 1.

used indiscriminately, though the offices and powers were distinct—that Bishops, as we understand the name and office, were often called "presbyters" or "elders" or "priests"; and priests, corresponding in functions and authority with the "priests" of our day, were called "Bishops" or "overseers". It seems certain, also, from the incident at Miletus—where St. Paul "called to him the presbyters" and then addressed them as "Bishops"—that the same persons bore sometimes both names. And it may be that the powers of the Episcopacy and of the priesthood were vested always in the same individuals, that full Episcopal Orders were conferred on every priest in Apostolic times. We cannot advance much further in the solution of the question, with the aid of the New Testament alone. Nor is it necessary; for this, at any rate, the New Testament does make clear to us: that already during the lifetime of the Apostles, a very few years after the death of Christ, there were men, not themselves Apostles, appointed and ordained through the Apostles by the Holy Ghost to exercise authority in the local Churches. They are to "preach the word," to "impose, or lay on, hands," to "ordain priests,"

to "rule the Church," to "feed the flock of God," to "command and teach,"[1] to "receive an accusation against a priest only under two or three witnesses,"[2] to "reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine,"[3] to "speak, exhort, reprove, with all authority,"[4] to "commit to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also the things which they had heard"[5] from the Apostles. Assuredly, we have in these and similar passages convincing proof that the office and powers of Christian Bishops, as they have been known to the Catholic Church throughout her history, existed already fully and definitely in the Apostolic Church. The titles given to the office, and to the men who held it, have an historical interest only, and are without bearing on the one important question: Is the office itself, and are the powers inherent in it, of Divine institution, and of established usage in Apostolic times? The answer of the New Testament is an emphatic affirmative.

And we are strengthened in this opinion by all the information we can glean from the scanty remains of the earliest Church writings. St.

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 11. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 19. [3] 2 Tim. iv. 2. [4] Tit. ii. 15. [5] 2 Tim. ii. 2.

Clement of Rome, towards the close of the first century, in his letter to the Corinthians, mentions as a fact, about which there could be apparently no doubt, that "the Apostles, instructed by our Lord Christ, . . . themselves appointed Bishops, and gave order that, when such Bishops died, other approved men should succeed them in their office".[1] And he goes on to censure the Corinthians gravely for their rebellion against their Bishops. About the year 107, Ignatius Martyr, disciple of St. John the Evangelist, in several of his authentic letters, shows us a Church organization very much the same as it is in our own day. He was himself Bishop of Antioch; and in his various letters, written to local Churches, on his way from Antioch to Rome and martyrdom, he assumes the government of each to lie in the hands of one Bishop, with priests and deacons to assist him; and he is emphatic in urging the duty of union with and obedience to the Bishop. "When you are subject to the Bishop as to Jesus Christ," he tells the Trallians, "you seem to me to live according to Jesus Christ, and not according to

[1] XLIV. 1; Lightfoot, II. p. 131.

men."[1] And to the same Trallians he says further on: "It is necessary you should do nothing whatsoever without your Bishop".[2] To the Ephesians he writes: "It is manifest we should look upon the Bishop as Christ Himself";[3] and to the Smyrniots: "Apart from the Bishop, let no man do aught of things pertaining to the Church; let that be held a valid Eucharist which is under the Bishop, or one to whom he shall have committed it. . . . It is not lawful apart from the Bishop either to baptize or to celebrate the Agape; but whatever he shall approve, that is well pleasing to God also."[4] And, again, to the Philadelphians: "See to it that you partake of one Eucharist, for one is the flesh of Christ our Lord, and one the chalice of His blood, one altar, and there is one Bishop, with his priests and deacons".[5] And there are many other passages equally clear and equally decisive in his seven great Epistles, in which his teaching is briefly this: The Hierarchy of

[1] Trall., II. 5; Lightfoot, II. p. 154.
[2] *Ibid.*, II. 10; Lightfoot, p. 155.
[3] Eph. VI. 1; Lightfoot, p. 46.
[4] Smyrn., VIII. 10; Lightfoot, p. 309.
[5] Phil. IV. 10; Lightfoot, p. 257.

the Church was instituted by Christ Himself; it consists of three Orders—Bishops, priests, and deacons; Bishops are superior, by Divine authority, to priests; they are to be found in all Churches; without them there is no Church;[1] all are to be united with and to obey them. Indeed the testimony of Ignatius is so cogent in favour of the Catholic doctrine of Episcopal authority, and of Episcopal authority as exercised by one Bishop in each local Church, before the beginning of the second century, and he assumes so unquestioningly in all his letters that the arrangement is everywhere the same, and that no one of those to whom he writes will controvert his statements, or make any charge of novelty against him, that many opponents of Episcopacy are driven to assert the spuriousness of the letters. But, since Bishop Lightfoot's labours, no serious critic will be found to even doubt their genuineness.

One other writer I shall quote—from the second half of the second century. St. Irenæus, the friend of Polycarp, who had been disciple of St. John, represents the ecclesiastical tradition of both East and West; and he is, if anything, more

[1] Trall., III. 1; Lightfoot, p. 158.

explicit than Ignatius Martyr, in declaring the authority of Bishops and their Apostolic origin. "We must be obedient," he says, "to the presbyters of the Church, to those who have succession from the Apostles, who have received the certain gift of truth, together with the Episcopal inheritance."[1] He speaks of "those who were instituted Bishops by the Apostles, and are their successors even to our own day";[2] and, because it would be too long to enumerate the succession of Bishops "in all the Churches," he gives that of Rome and of Smyrna, in the latter of which his friend Polycarp had been appointed Bishop by the Apostles.

I do not cite the testimony of later writers; for it is agreed on all hands that dating from the second century, the belief of the Church, expressed in the clearest terms by her Fathers and historians and Councils, has always been the same belief which the Council of Trent defined: that the Bishops of the Catholic Church are the successors of the Apostles, appointed, according to Christ's institution, for the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of religious rites, and the govern-

[1] "Contra Haer.," IV. c. 26, n. 2; M. G., VII. 1053.

[2] *Ibid.*, III. c. 3, 1; M. G., VII. 848.

ment of local Churches. And the Church herself has no power to make any change in this Divine economy. She could no more alter the constitution given her by Christ and promulgated by the Apostles, in what concerns the Episcopal Order than in what concerns the Primacy. The one is as necessary to her existence as the other. It is not essential that she should ordain deacons, as a class apart, to be occupied in special ministerial functions. Deaconship, in fact, according to the present discipline of the Church, is only a stage on the way towards the priesthood. The deacon is absorbed in the priest; one man holds and exercises the twofold office. Similarly, it is not essential there should be a separate body of priests, either secular or religious. As the same individual is at present priest and deacon, so he might be Bishop also were the Church to so determine. We might have Bishops only, to teach and minister in the Church, who would unite in their own persons the several Offices and Orders of Bishops, priests, and deacons. But the Episcopacy itself, scattered throughout the world, and governing and teaching the local churches, with a God-given authority, is essential to the Church's very existence, no less than to her well-being.

And when we inquire what the authority of Bishops is, we find the answer in what we have already seen: that the Bishops succeed to the Apostles. Their office, therefore, within certain limits is the Apostolic office; their duties, their authority, those of the Apostles. They have to teach, preserve, and spread Christ's Gospel. They have to feed and govern the faithful committed to their care. They have to hand on the Office and the powers which were entrusted to them. We say they have to do this "within certain limits," for their mission is not quite the same as that of the Apostles. The Bishops as a body, succeed to the Apostles as a body; "college succeeds," it has been said, "to college". But only the head of the Apostolic College has a successor with all the fullness of that Apostle's powers and rights. The Roman Bishop of to-day has the same Divine mission, receives precisely the same authority which the first Roman Bishop, St. Peter, had. But other Bishops individually are under somewhat different conditions. They are not sent "into the whole world," not commanded to "preach the Gospel unto every creature" as the Apostles were. A definite portion of the vineyard is assigned to each of them,

a part only of the flock of Christ. Nor is their individual teaching protected by infallibility, as we conceive the teaching of each Apostle to have been. They may misconceive, they may falsify, the message which they are sent to convey.

But we shall understand better the nature and the extent of their authority, if we consider the threefold class of circumstances under which they exercise it. The Bishops of the Catholic Church may meet to take counsel on the necessities of the Universal Church, to make laws for the guidance of all the faithful, to explain or define doctrines which all are to believe. Even dispersed throughout the world, each busied with the needs of his own flock, they still constitute, when taken together, the one Divinely appointed body of teachers and rulers on whom the faith and unity of the Church depend. And finally, they may be regarded as individual members of the one great ruling and teaching body, in their relation only to those of the faithful who are committed to each one's special care.

They may meet in Council. I do not intend to discuss here at any length the various questions which are concerned with General Councils. It will be enough to say that the Bishops of the

Church may come together under such circumstances that they shall be, or shall adequately represent, the teaching and governing authority of the Church. And, should they do so, it is clear that their decisions must carry all the value which attaches to such authority. Their definitions, in matters of Divine Faith, must be infallible: for the congregated Bishops constitute or represent the teaching Church; the Church universal is bound to accept their teaching; and both the teaching and the universal Church are endowed with infallibility. Their laws, too, within the sphere in which the Church has power to legislate, are binding upon all the faithful. They form a High Court, from which there is no appeal, in judicial proceedings; and they can exercise all the functions of a supreme executive.

Or, we may consider the Bishops of the Catholic Church, "dispersed" throughout the world engaged in their ordinary duties of teaching and governing, but still forming, in the aggregate, one body of teachers and rulers. Considered in this way, it is impossible to see how they can exercise any judicial or executive functions. They cannot even legislate; though if they chanced, or

were all agreed, to frame the same laws, each for his own diocese, those laws would soon acquire the binding force of universal custom. But what if they are at one in teaching doctrines of Faith or Morals? Then, beyond all doubt, they are infallible. Dispersed, no less than gathered together in Council, they are the teaching Church; and the teaching Church is not infallible then only when, on rare occasions, the Bishops are convened in œcumenical assemblies. The Church, too, is passively infallible; and the Church believes, and must believe, what, day by day, and year by year, the Bishops of the Church, her Divinely appointed teachers, are agreed in teaching. A Bishop may err, through ignorance or in malice; the Bishops of a province, of a nation, may teach heresy; neither active nor passive infallibility is promised to individuals or to peoples. But the whole teaching body, the whole believing Church, cannot err in delivering, or in holding the revealed doctrines of the Faith; and, therefore, the unanimous teaching of the Bishops, even when dispersed, must be infallible.

Or, finally—and this is the most important point to be considered, as being of most practical and immediate consequence—we may take each

Bishop in his own particular diocese, and inquire what his authority is in it. I do not speak now of the authority which Bishops in the past have often exercised, and which in places many exercise, in fact, to-day, without any Divinely given right to do so. Christian Europe, in mediaeval times, entrusted large powers to the Head of the Christian Church, which were no part of the authority bestowed on him by her Founder. So, too, in the case of Bishops; circumstances have led often to their acceptance of duties and privileges entirely outside their spiritual mission. They became princes of the Empire, peers of parliament, high officers of State, judges in merely civil matters. Until recent years, the Archbishop of Armagh, in Ireland, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, in England, by inheritance from pre-Reformation times, had their Courts of Probate, in which all questions concerning wills were to be decided. And Bishops, of course, lose none of their rights as citizens at consecration; they are entitled to all the influence and authority which birth and ability, and education, or other natural and acquired qualities may win for them. We speak, therefore, of that authority alone which is inherent in their office, which Christ be-

stows upon them when appointed to a diocese. And the general reply to our inquiry is plain and easy. Each Bishop in his diocese, and under certain limitations, is to his own faithful people what an Œcumenical Council and the Roman Pontiff are to the Church universal. Under certain limitations: for his laws and precepts, his judicial decisions, his executive measures, may be appealed against. He may not decide questions of Faith or Morals, which, with the knowledge and acquiescence of the Church, are subjects of controversy among Catholics. His doctrinal decisions are not infallible. But within these limitations, the authority of the Church is in his hands to exercise.

He is the one authentic teacher of Faith and Morals within the diocese. To him, and to him only, are Our Lord's words applicable: "Going, therefore, preach the Gospel". To him, and to him only, may be applied the instructions and exhortations addressed by St. Paul to Titus and to Timothy. He, and he alone, is the successor of the Apostles. He, and he alone, has received the Apostolic Commission. There may be others in his diocese, abler, of greater intellectual gifts, more profound, more widely read theologians.

There may be some among his clergy, both secular and regular, more eloquent, better fitted to expound the truths of Revelation. But he, not they, is the Divinely appointed public teacher of his people. They can only teach publicly at all in so far as he permits, or calls, them to assist him in his labours; and they can only teach what the Bishops in union with their head on earth approve and sanction.

And his teaching authority extends to the whole contents of the Christian revelation. It is clear that he has no direct commission to communicate profane knowledge. He may be deeply versed in history, philosophy, biology, or mathematics: but he has not been sent to preach them; they are not part of the Gospel, which Christ has entrusted to him. His concern, like that of the Church, which he represents officially, is with the "Deposit of Faith," the body of revealed truths, which Christ and His Holy Spirit made known to the Apostles. This he must explain and defend; as also whatever other truths are so bound up with it that they stand or fall together. And his people are obliged to accept his teaching. They may not reject it, they may not pass it idly by: they are bound, speaking generally, to give

assent to it. I know, of course, that a Bishop may err in what he teaches, even in matters of revealed Faith and Morals. But the mere possibility of error in a teacher exempts no one from the duty of believing. When a child receives its first lessons in religion from a parent or a guardian, it is not justified in denying or even doubting the truths proposed to it, on the ground that father or mother or guardian may be mistaken. If my Bishop teaches what I know to be at variance with the admitted doctrines of the Church, or if I have serious reasons for questioning his statements, I may withhold assent, and, in the former case, I must withhold it. But in the ordinary circumstances of life, and where no grave reason for doubt presents itself, to refuse belief in matters of Faith and Morals to what my Bishop teaches me is to reject a message which purports to be Divine, conveyed to me by a messenger whom I know to be Divinely appointed. Besides, it would mean that I should believe only what I chose myself; and it would base the whole religion of the Church upon private judgment. And hence a Bishop's religious teaching has a claim upon his flock, which no other teaching, except the infallible teaching of the Church, can have.

The inferior clergy, those charged with the cure of souls, members of Religious Orders, professors in great seats of ecclesiastical learning, parents themselves, may and must teach the truths of the Christian Revelation; but they are not specially accredited messengers; they have no special appointment from God, the author of that Revelation.

And not only is the Bishop in his diocese to teach authoritatively, within the limits of Faith and Morals, but it is for him also to declare authoritatively, in case of doubt, how far those limits extend. There are questions which lie evidently within the sphere of revealed truth, if there be any such sphere at all. There are others which lie as evidently without it. But there is a third class of questions, on which opinion may be divided, or in which at least the Bishop's authority to pronounce may more readily be denied or doubted. And this is the common lot of all authority, which is only finite; whether it be civil or religious, in the home, the State, or the Universal Church. There will be a certain territory in which each holds undisputed sway; there will be other territories, in which it has no jurisdiction whatsoever; and there may be some,

in which its claims are doubtful, or are at any rate contested according to the varying interests or principles or passions which are affected. Now, it is in this third class of question that we assert the Bishop's right to determine, subject to appeal, the limits of his own jurisdiction. He has not only the power to teach, but he has also the power to declare what questions are contained within the limits of his teaching power. For, if he have not, who has? Not the State; the State has no power of interference in the teaching of the Christian Revelation. Not, surely, the persons to be taught? It has never been suggested that those subject to a jurisdiction must be permitted to fix its limits. Therefore, it must be the Bishop. We argue here as we do in the case of Church infallibility. The Church is infallible, not only in determining questions of Faith and Morals, but in determining how far the circumference of Faith and Morals extends. If those whom her teaching failed to please might lawfully refuse assent, by pleading that, while bound to yield submission where she had a right to claim it, it was they themselves who were to judge how far her right extends, then her teaching authority could be always set aside.

But, indeed, every authority—legislative, judicial, executive, as well as doctrinal—must have the right to declare what are the boundaries of its own jurisdiction. If the authority be supreme, no appeal, of course, is possible; but still the right is always claimed and exercised. If an appeal lies, the decision of the inferior authority may be called in question; but, until overruled, the decision holds; and those subject to the authority are bound to accept and to obey it. I may not, therefore, avoid an act of supreme Church authority on the ground that the subject matter of her decision lies outside her jurisdiction: she can declare infallibly what her jurisdiction is. And, in matters not clearly beyond the bounds of Episcopal authority, I may not refuse obedience or assent upon the ground that, in my opinion, the limits of rightful authority have been exceeded. I may, of course, appeal to a higher court; but I may not myself reject the decision arbitrarily; and until my appeal is admitted and allowed, the decision of my Bishop binds me.

The principle, as you will see, is an important one, and when feeling runs high, one liable to be ignored or questioned even by Catholics themselves. We have already had occasion to con-

sider that the mission of the Church is a spiritual one—to souls. It is only indirectly that, as a Society, she can interfere in what is temporal: only in so far as things temporal have a bearing on what is spiritual. Now, given her right to exist at all, no one will question her authority in things purely spiritual. Further, we Catholics ourselves disclaim for her all power to meddle in things merely temporal. But there is a wide field of matters, in themselves temporal, but with a spiritual side, which some will think justifies, others will think does not justify, Church interference. Who is to decide the question? On Catholic principles, the Church herself, and the Church only. Now, the Bishop exercises, fallibly, subject to appeal, and under certain limitations, the powers inherent in the Church universal. He has direct and unquestioned power in things wholly spiritual; he has no power whatsoever in things wholly temporal. In those of a mixed nature, he has authority, so far as its exercise is needed for his spiritual mission. Who is to decide when it is so needed? On Catholic principles, it is not the State, not politicians, not individual Catholics lay or clerical: it is the Bishop himself; and, subject to appeal, the Bishop only.

The Bishop, therefore, is the one authoritative teacher in his diocese; and he is to teach revealed truth, truth necessary for its maintenance, and, therefore, if need be, the extent of his own teaching authority.

He is also a governor or ruler; and as such he may make laws for his diocese. Every social body has power to legislate for its members. If men join together to work out a common purpose, there must be rules of conduct binding upon all, and some machinery to enforce their execution. Otherwise there will be chaos. But the larger the social body is, the more widely it extends, the more need there will be to provide for local conditions and necessities. You cannot have one only code, which shall be applicable, in all its details, to every portion of the British Empire. There must be colonial and provincial legislatures; there are county, municipal, and district councils, with power to frame by-laws and regulations for the areas subject to them. Now Pope and Bishops are the only law-makers of the Church. When they meet in Œcumenical Councils, they legislate for the universal Church; and the Pope, in virtue of his primacy, can do as much alone. But, in a world-wide empire, like the

Church, universal laws must be supplemented to meet local needs. And so we have National Synods or Councils, and Provincial Synods, in which the Bishops of a whole country, or of an ecclesiastical province in it, make laws in common for the laity and clergy confided to their care. There remains the diocese—the Divinely appointed unit of Church organization. Its conditions may be so peculiarly its own as to require some special legislation. If so, the Bishop is Divinely empowered to provide it. We need not repeat here what has been already said, as to the authority of the Bishops defined in the New Testament, and in the lifelong usage or traditions of the universal Church. It all applies to the Bishop in his diocese, and to his legislative power. And it shows us also how that power is limited. Like the Church herself he cannot modify or even dispense from the Divine law. He may not legislate against general Church law—statute or customary, or against the decrees of National or Provincial Synods, though he may dispense from them in certain cases. He cannot make laws which are concerned with merely temporal matters, or aim at merely temporal results. His legislation, like all his authority, is

spiritual. And, even in the spiritual order, his legislation must be reasonable, must not impose an unduly heavy burthen upon his flock. Hence the universally admitted axiom : "Church law—whether universal or particular—does not bind, when grave inconvenience would be the consequence". But, in the spiritual order, and even in those temporal matters which, as we have seen, may be linked closely with the spiritual, and subject to the limitations imposed by Divine and ecclesiastical law or usage, a Bishop's right to enact laws, and issue precepts, in his diocese can only be defined by the spiritual welfare of his people. His right is beyond all doubt, in matters purely spiritual. He makes rules for the teaching of the Faith, the administration of Sacraments, the offering of the Holy Sacrifice, the whole ritual of public worship. But, in matters not purely spiritual and in particular instances, his right is not always quite so evident. His case is similar to that of the supreme authority of the Church. It is often difficult to show clearly such a relation between the temporal and the spiritual as to warrant the Church's interference in what of itself is temporal. The interference, too, is sometimes based, as it was at times in the Middle Ages,

on a grant of power by princes or by peoples to the Church. Or a law may have grown out of custom, introduced by the faithful themselves, and merely sanctioned by the Church's rulers. Thus the Church forbids the use of certain meats at certain times; but the prohibition seems to be the outcome of popular custom, and not of any statutory enactment. How far the Church could forbid the use of other kinds of food, at times or altogether; how far she could legislate on dress, social amusements, professional occupations, civil contracts, political associations, and kindred matters, because of their bearing upon spiritual interests, it might not be easy in particular cases to decide. But two things seem quite clear—one, that she has power to make laws and impose precepts in such matters when the well-being of souls is vitally concerned; the other, that when doubt arises in an individual case it is for her to determine what her power is. No one else can. Somewhat in the same way we must regard the Bishop, legislating for his own flock where the subject matter is primarily temporal, but important spiritual issues are involved. He forbids the reading of a newspaper or of a book; he condemns a particular form of

amusement; he warns his people against a secular association; he calls on them upon occasion to vote with a political party at Parliamentary or municipal elections, and the like. No Catholic can question his right to do so, if adequate spiritual interests are concerned. But who shall judge? The newspaper editor? A politician? The author of the book? Only the Bishop himself, or, on appeal, his superior in the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy. And until an appeal is taken and allowed, the decision of the Bishop stands. Otherwise all Episcopal jurisdiction, however Divinely given, could be reduced to naught.

And, finally, the Bishop has judicial and executive authority as well. But we need not consider it in any detail. Practically, in our day, the Bishop acts as judge towards members of his clergy only; the penalties that he imposes are purely spiritual; and no principle is involved which we have not already taken into consideration.

And now, in closing this series of lectures, may I sum up briefly the stages through which we have passed in our inquiry?

We desired to justify, on purely rational grounds, our own position as Catholics, and to

study in its broad outlines the Constitution of the Church of which we are members. And we began with an examination of the historical sources, from which almost all our knowledge of the Church's Founder and foundation is derived. We saw that critically, on both intrinsic and extrinsic evidence, the writings of the New Testament are documents of unimpeachable value, entirely trustworthy in what they tell us of the persons, doctrines, and events which they describe. We gathered from them the claims and the character of Christ, which prove conclusively that Christ was God ; a conclusion rendered still more certain by His Resurrection from the dead. Christ, God, planned and established a Society, which He called His Church, which is to be imperishable, universal, numerically and organically one, infallible in teaching and belief, the ordinary source and channel of the fullness of His graces to mankind. That Church exists to-day, and can only be the Roman Catholic Church, since she alone is possessed of that unity in Catholicity which Christ promised to His Church, and since she alone is and claims to be infallible. All this, I think, we have satisfactorily established, and so have laid the foundations of our whole Faith

and practice. We can and must "believe everything which the Holy Roman Catholic Church proposes to our belief"; and we must obey the whole law, her own and the Divine, which she lays upon us. Then, examining the structure of the Church as a Society, we found it to be Monarchical, taught and governed by one visible Head on earth, to whom in Peter and his successors Christ gave supreme authority. The Bishop of Rome, St. Peter's successor, is therefore infallible in teaching, and exercises the fullness of the Church's jurisdiction over us. But we live under a more immediate spiritual head, the Bishop of our diocese, who is set by the Holy Ghost to teach and govern us. These two—the Pope and our Bishop—are in the ordinary Providence of God the Divinely appointed representatives of Christ to us. They come to us with a Divine authority which no one else can lay claim to or possess.

It is well with us, then, in the Catholic Church, where we have the infallible teaching of religious truth, the Sacraments and sacrifice instituted by Christ for our sanctification and salvation, the guidance of a Divinely appointed religious authority which speaks to us with the voice, and in the name, of God.

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